The phony bin Laden-Saddam connection

Washington MONTHLY

THE NEXT SWING VOTER

By Benjamin Wallace-Wells

ovember 2003 $4.50

Wesley Clark on America's Virtual Empire • Walter Shapiro on the decision to run for president • Reviews of books by Gregg Easterbrook, Jon Meacham, and Robert Bork

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Washington MONTHLY

Volume 35, No. 11
November 2003

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Letters

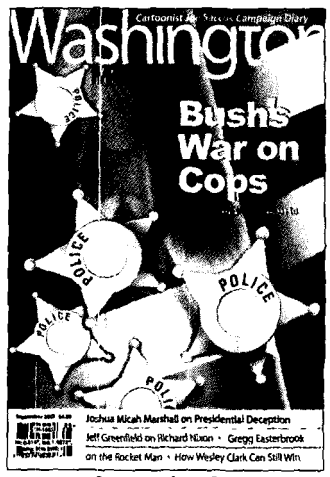
Blue crush

Benjamin Wallace-Wells should be commended for his recent cover story exposing the dangerous cutbacks in many of our nation's police departments ("Bush's War on Cops," September). The issue deserves attention, and Wallace-Wells's primary contention—that cutting funding for police forces during this era of increased police responsibility and economic stagnancy is both irresponsible and potentially deadly—is beyond argument. Unfortunately, much of the evidence he marshals to prove his claims remains highly speculative and a bit misleading.

First is Wallace-Wells's assertion that the cutbacks in police staffing levels in certain jurisdictions (like Richmond, Va.) have contributed to the very modest upturn in the country's murder rate during the past few years. As he highlights, according to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, the murder rate increased by nearly 1 percent between 2001 and 2002, and stands a few percentage points higher than back in 2000.

Yes, murder is up nationwide, albeit slightly, and "the sudden disintegration of the police forces," as Wallace-Wells puts it, may have something to do with the upsurge. Yet cops do more than solve (let alone prevent) murders—and homicides represent a tiny fraction of the nation's violent crimes. If the dissipation of police forces has contributed to the rise in murders, surely a similar pattern holds for more common offenses.

Unfortunately, the correlation doesn't hold—a fact that Wallace-Wells fails to mention. According to the FBI's calculations, between 2001 and 2002 the overall violent crime rate actually declined by 14 percent. This finding is validated by the 2002 National Criminal Victimization Survey published by the Bureau of Justice Statistics: It reports that between 2001 and 2002, relatively common offenses like robbery and assault fell significantly. In fact, the overall property and violent crime rates in the 2002 report are the lowest recorded since the program's inception 20 years ago.



September 2003

"Cutting funding for police forces in a time of increased police responsibility and economic stagnancy is irresponsible and potentially deadly"
—Jake Rosenfeld

Moreover, Wallace-Wells's reliance on rising murder rates as evidence of the effects of police understaffing isn't particularly convincing either. He argues that those cities "that suffer from the worst cop shortages are also experiencing the most dramatic spikes in crime", citing places like Portland, Ore., and Los Angeles, Calif., as examples. Again, there may be some truth to this claim. But he doesn't mention New York City's police force—so large that back in 2000 it comprised a tenth of the nation's total—and its own recent staff cutbacks. In New York City, the number of officers assigned to precincts has declined significantly over the past few years. Meanwhile, the murder rate has dropped to its lowest level in over four decades.

So what is the relationship between recent cop shortages and crime levels? It is simply too soon to tell. It may be that in certain jurisdictions—like Richmond—police staffing shortages have contributed to rising crime. But no evidence exists to generalize this trend to the nation as a whole. Indeed, cities with historically high homicide rates, like St. Louis, have continued to enjoy declining homicide rates despite budget shortages. Preliminary studies on these matters are underway but no hard evidence exists as of yet.

Jake Rosenfeld
Princeton, N.J.

Clark spark

Amy Sullivan has it right ("General Election," September). No, it's not too late for Clark. Clinton did not jump in until October. Clark supporters will find the money. Clark has great name recognition already and will get a great boost from the press who treat him with deference. I'm old enough to recall Ike. As soon as he announced, it was a foregone conclusion. Even Democrats voted for him. Many members of the GOP will vote for Clark. I feel it in my bones.

Virgil Jose
Via email

Bush and shove

Joshua Micah Marshall ("The Post-Modern President," September) explains President Bush's repeated lies as the result of trying to fit the world into a preconceived ideological mold, an effort that requires discarding or negating inconvenient facts. Yet Bush is not himself the author of most of the policies that his administration pursues. If he were in fact able to fashion a consistent ideological worldview, that would be a considerable intellectual achievement, something that no one else has yet accomplished.

While recognizing that not everything done in the name of the Bush administration is part of its program (the huge bureaucracy continues of its own momentum), I think that essentially all of Bush's

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decisions and actions can be explained by the following rules:

1. Bush seeks to advance and protect the immediate economic interests of a few thousand wealthy, powerful families, whom he regards as the elect of society, regardless of the impact on everyone else.

2. Most voters don't care about federal policies, as long as their personal interests—taxes, social security, Medicare—don't change for the worse. While the actual impact of Bush's policies can be cushioned or deferred, often by hapless Democratic politicians who may then be blamed as well (i.e., Gray Davis), the great apathetic majority won't react.

3. Bush needs voters who can be mobilized by the threat of terrorism and war, his personal charm, the money of his supporters, and a judicious mix of rhetoric and high-visibility social initiatives.

Keith Roberts
New York, N.Y.

An excellent piece in a series of excellent analyses by Josh Marshall. But there is a piece missing. The Bush administration is not operating from the same set of assumptions as the majority of the nation or its elected representatives. Most of us assume that our elected officials on both sides of the aisle are working to find ways to make our government function better. But this view does not seem to be shared by the Bush White House.

I'm convinced that the neocons regard the federal government as an outmoded socialist entity, which they would like to abolish. In fact, they are in the process of spending it to death. How else to explain the upside-down economics of accelerated spending and deep tax cuts? Surely the former corporate executives who comprise the upper echelon of the administration know how to read a balance sheet.

I think that conservatives, not liberals, should have the greatest anger toward the Bush administration. True conservatives were scammed by the first and most profound deception of this administration: They talked like moderates before the election, and governed with a hard-right approach afterwards. There's nothing conservative about any of their policies—radical isn't a strong enough word.

David Ellis
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Burning questions

I found your "Mendacity Index" (September) to be quite entertaining. However, I have a quibble with one of the alleged "lies" of Bill Clinton—his statement that he had "vivid and painful memories of black churches being burned in my own state when I was a child."

The June 9, 1996 *Arkansas Democrat-Gazette* article that you cite did not state that there was no evidence of such bombings, only that two people interviewed claim-ed not to have any such recollection.

But two days later, on June 11, 1996, the paper printed a retraction and correction identifying a number of such burnings—one of which occurred in Clinton's home town when he was 17 years old.

David Wolfe
via email

Redesign wave

Congratulations! With your September 2003 issue, you have made a great magazine greater, a readable magazine much more readable, a good-looking magazine more handsome. The magazine in its redesign has become more accessible, clearer, stronger.

Thank you for helping your readers to understand better the complex forces that are responsible for trying to redesign America. I can only hope that they are less successful than you are.

Lou Friedman
Canton, Conn.

The Washington Monthly welcomes letters from our readers. Please send your comments (which may be edited for length and clarity) to:

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Tilting at **Windmills**

by **Charles Peters**, founding editor

Lucky duckies

The District of Columbia government has an Incentive Awards Committee that determines cash bonuses to city employees. Three percent of the employees get the bonus. Guess the percentage of committee members who get it? Fifty.

Pulling out

Among the first reactions to my proposal that we announce we're pulling out of Iraq in a year was that we should stay longer to keep the religious groups in Iraq from going to war with one another. My answer is that the British stayed in India for more than 100 years after they took control in 1856, and that did not prevent the Hindus and Muslims from slaughtering one another the moment the British departed.

My point is that, although there are many laudable goals possibly attainable by our staying in Iraq for the long haul, their achievement is far from certain enough to justify the money that will be spent and the lives that will be lost. This is especially clear when one contemplates the many other, more compelling, demands on our resources.

Promoting the messenger

Jonathan Landman was recently promoted to be assistant managing editor of *The New York Times*. This is worth noting because, as you may remember, Landman was the man who blew the whistle on Jayson Blair. And, as students of bureaucracy know, whistleblowers tend to suffer rather than profit from their good deed. This is an encouraging sign that Bill Keller, the *Times*' new executive editor, knows what he's doing.

Tabling the problem

On the other hand, *The Washington Post* reports that Wayne Hale, the new head of NASA's management team for shuttle missions, "is talking about the importance of the shape of the table" at meetings. He thinks that a redesigned table would change the agency's culture. One hopes he knows that a more impressive signal to everyone in the organization would be to fire the people who suppressed or failed to act on information about the hazards that destroyed Columbia, and to promote or otherwise reward those who saw the hazards and tried to do something about them. This is exactly what was not done at NASA after the Challenger disaster, and the failure to act perpetuated a culture that rewards those who refuse to hear bad news and threatens those who bring it.

I should note that "bad news" might not be the best term to describe what I'm talking about. Certainly in the case of the Niger uranium, it was good news that the uranium was not going to Iraq. But it was good news the Bush administration didn't want, which is why Joseph Wilson and Valerie Plame had to be punished. So maybe instead of "bad news," we should say "news the top guys don't want to hear."

War games

Emily Basile, a high school student in my hometown, Charleston, W.Va., got in trouble last winter for protesting the Iraq War. When her principal, an African American named Clinton Giles, objected, she told him, "Without Rosa Parks, you wouldn't be where you are right now."

Giles reacted by calling her "racist and bigoted" and suspended her from school. I think he should have hugged her and held an assembly in her honor. How many American high school students have any idea who Rosa Parks was, much less that her protest of segregation was an apt precedent for Basile's protest of the war?

Team player

It turns out that an engineer named Rodney Rocha was the leading white hat of the Columbia shuttle story. At a meeting of NASA and contract engineers five days after the Columbia launch, to assess potential damage from the broken-off foam, the participants agreed images of the impact area were needed from telescopes or spy satellites. They designated Rocha to convey their concern to shuttle managers. Rocha tried six times, report James Glanz and John Schwartz in *The New York Times*. Each time the managers turned him away. One told him that he refused to be a "Chicken Little." Another emailed: "I consider it to be a dead issue."

That reminds me of what a shuttle manager said to the engineers who wanted to postpone the Challenger launch because of the danger of frozen O-rings. "I'm appalled," said George Hardy. He was appalled that the engineers would dare suggest postponing the launch. Hardy then reminded the engineers that the contract of their employer, Morton Thiokol, which built the shuttle boosters, "is coming up for renewal soon," in an attempt to intimidate them into silence.

Resistance to bad news increases as the bureaucratic ladder is climbed. This is partly because those at the top believe their own press releases. It is also because they're desperate to conceal the bad news until they have left the agency and no longer can be blamed. Whatever the reason, these attitudes at the top encourage subordi-

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nates to not rush to bring bad tidings. Another factor: exciting programs and exciting leaders inspire a loyalty to "the team" that makes whistleblowers feel like traitors. Finally, even Rocha was overcome by these feelings: "I lost my steam, the power drive to have a fight, because I just wasn't being supported. And I had faith in the abilities of our team."

Tug of war

I apologize for the indelicacy of the question, but do you have trouble with the toilet paper at your workplace? When you tug, do you find yourself having difficulty getting more than a sheet or two? If so, you are not alone. Many toilet paper dispensers are now designed to be grudging in their response. It saves your boss, or his landlord, money, reports *The Wall Street Journal*'s Jared Sandberg. A common technique for frustrating the user is to put two rolls in the stainless steel dispenser. They tend to jam together so that no matter how hard you tug, repeated effort is going to be necessary to obtain even a minimally satisfactory result.

Do fries come with it?

Coca-Cola wanted Burger King to run a national campaign for Frozen Coke. Burger King said, let's try it out first. Richmond, Va., was chosen as the site of the trial. Customers who bought "Value Meals" were given a coupon entitling them to a Frozen Coke, the redemption of which would demonstrate the drink's popularity. This meant Coke needed for lots of Value Meals to be sold in order for lots of coupons to be redeemed. A consultant hired by Coke decided not to leave the matter to chance. He arrived in Richmond with $9,000 in cash that he proceeded to hand out to organizations like the Boys and Girls Club on condition that the money be used to buy Value Meals for the kids. I am indebted to Chad Terhune of *The Wall Street Journal* for this illustration of modern American business at work.

The lesson for bosses is that if you push employees for results, you better be sure to find out what they're doing to achieve them. It may be as absurd as in this case, or it may be tragic, as was the pressure to launch at NASA.

The real job

Gretchen Morgenson had a line about the recently retired president of the New York Stock Exchange that reminds one of what that institution is really about, when she described the "$140 million paid to Richard Grasso for his work as a casino greeter."

Springtime for Arnold

The recent discussions of Arnold Schwarzenegger's feelings about Adolf Hitler—surprisingly, reporters failed to mention the Terminator's devotion to his friend the former Nazi officer Kurt Waldheim, who won an Iron Cross for his service to the Fuhrer—reminded me of one of the great mysteries of the modern era: How and why did Arnold's fellow Austrians escape their fair share of accountability for their Nazi past? Today's Austrians may be splendid fellows, but the cheering mob that greeted Hitler in Vienna in 1938 was not a whit less fervent than the throngs of Germans who cheered him at Nuremberg or when he returned to Berlin from a conquered France in 1940.

When Austrian Jews either died in concentration camps or were forced to flee the country, their property was taken over by Aryan Austrians, the great majority of whom refused to give it back after the war. Austria was totally freed of Allied occupation in 1955, 34 years before the last Soviet troops left Germany. Nazi Austria was treated better than Nazi Germany. Indeed, the world seemed to forget that Austria had embraced Hitler. It was not until a few years ago that American negotiators led by Stuart Eisenstadt got the Austrian government to finally acknowledge

WHITE HOUSE SCANDAL?

Remember the famous eighteen-and-a-half-minute gap in the Nixon tape—the one Rose Mary Woods desperately tried to explain by stretching backwards until she almost fell over? I suspect the new scandal is going to be the 11-hour gap between the time the Justice Department notified the White House counsel that it was investigating the Wilson-Plame leak and the time the counsel instructed other White House officials not to destroy relevant records. Actually, it could be called the 48-hour gap, since that was the time elapsed between the time the *Post* broke the story and the time the counsel acted. But the only difference I can see is that if it was 48, the line at the shredding machine would've been shorter.

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the nation's guilt by agreeing to pay $150 million in restitution for stolen Jewish property.

Hear no evil

If you can stand one more example of bureaucratic resistance to bad news, consider this lead sentence from a story by Diana Jean Schemo of *The New York Times*. Top leaders of the United States Air Force disregarded persistent warnings over the last decade that frequent and unpunished sexual assaults were undermining its academy at Colorado Springs, a civilian commission investigating the matter reported today.

The worst tax

Employment picked up in September, but the increase in jobs, reports David Leonhardt of *The New York Times*, "was still not large enough to match the growth of the population." This means "the percentage of adults with jobs fell to the lowest level in ten years."

More than 9 million Americans are officially unemployed. Many more would seek jobs if they were available. How are we going to solve this problem? The best solution, I believe, is to get rid of the payroll tax. It discourages employment. I know because for 32 years I ran a small business, namely this magazine. It also falls heaviest on those who need tax relief the most—for people making less than $70,000 a year, it is the largest tax they pay.

Bill Drayton and Bob Walker of the Get America Working! organization propose to replace the payroll tax with taxes on materials, energy, and land. Whatever substitute is found will take great courage to enact. Proponents will be accused of tampering with Social Security, which the payroll tax is supposed to fund, and the mere possibility of having that charge made against them is enough to panic a good many politicians. This is why I admire John Kerry, Bob Graham, and Carol Moseley Braun for having the moxie to propose at least some moderating of the tax.

A recent headline in the *Charleston Gazette* speaks volumes about the mess the Bush administration has gotten us into: "Vietnam-era R& R Back: Pentagon revives old program for troops serving in Iraq."

Bad news

On Sept. 6, *The Washington Post* ran a story about a poll that showed that most Americans believe that Saddam Hussein played a role in the 9/11 attacks. This story appeared on the front page. On Sept. 18 came a *Post* story describing George W. Bush's confession the previous day that there was no evidence that Saddam was involved in 9/11. This story was run on page A18. If the misconception merited page 1, didn't the truth deserve the same prominence?

Hope is not a plan

Speaking of Iraq, a new report called "Operation Iraqi Freedom: Strategic Lessons Learned" has been prepared for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Congressional Democrats "asked the Pentagon for a copy, and were told no," report Bill Gertz and Rowan Scarborough of *The Washington Times*. "They then asked if a copy could be brought to a classified room, where it could be read but not copied. Again the Pentagon said no." The reason for the Pentagon's reluctance, say Gertz and Scarborough, is that "the report gives the administration poor marks for planning for a post-Saddam Hussein Iraq." This news is especially credible because Gertz and Scarborough work for a conservative newspaper that definitely does not encourage reporting critical of the Bush administration.

Less medicaid, more tuition

When Arnold Schwarzenegger said he was going to ask George Bush for lots of favors, he betrayed a shocking ignorance of the president's indifference to the plight of the states. Republicans are supposed to favor the states, but during the Bush administration, state revenues have plummeted, thanks in part to the tax cut's reduction of the federal money available for sharing with the states. The result includes states having to reduce their Medicaid programs by, reports *The New York Times*, "scaling back eligibility, cutting benefits, increasing co-payments, and freezing or reducing payments to doctors and hospitals."

Another result of the financial squeeze on the states is what the *Times* calls the "eye-popping tuition increases" at state universities and colleges, with double-digit rises all over the place topped off by 39 percent at the University of Arizona. Since 80 percent of college students attend state schools, this should not be a cause for indifference.

But they have better weather

If you have not already guessed, the District of Columbia's public institutions have a marked similarity to those of the Third World. More than two-thirds of the city's fourth-graders and more than half of its eighth-graders have "below basic" reading ability, according to a recent report by the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The district's scores were worse than those of all 50 states, and according to George Archibald of *The Washington Times*, were "only slightly better than non-English speaking children in the territories of Guam, the Virgin Islands and American Samoa."

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Return to sender

We taxpayers who were not the beneficiaries of Bush's tax cuts have to accept the burden of paying the costs of mailing the checks to the beneficiaries. But should we also have had to pay—as we did in the case of the most recent cut—for the letter that the government sent out before the checks arrived announcing "we are pleased to inform you that the United States Congress has passed, and President Bush has signed into law, the Jobs, Growth and Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003. The new law provides broad-based tax relief." The Republican National Committee couldn't have said it better.

High living

Speaking of the latest tax cut, how are the already affluent, the major beneficiaries of Bush's largesse, going to cope with the challenge of spending it? Crocodile and alligator skins are in this year, reports *The Wall Street Journal*. Gentlemen's crocodile loafers by Bottega Veneta can be had for $2,440 a pair. Alligator satchels by Josie Natori are available to ladies who saved $5,500 on their dividends. Or, if you're rich and fat, Vanessa Grigoriadis of *The New York Times* says you can fast for a week at the New Age Health Spa for only $3,400. Sales at high-end retailers are already soaring. At Neiman Marcus, they were up 14.7 percent in September alone.

Lights out

"The three top officers of Pepco Holdings [the utility that couldn't get the lights back on in Washington] paid themselves $6.6 million in 2002 and possess at least $4 million in stock and stock options. Pepco's current budget for overhead power-line maintenance is $13.7 million," reports our alumnus Gregg Easterbrook. "The company's three top officers are pulling down almost as much as the utility's entire budget for overhead line maintenance." Easterbrook, writing on his new Web site, Easterblogg, adds that two nights after Hurricane Isabel hit, with half a million Pepco customers still in the dark, "Pepco Holdings chairman John Derrick sat drinking champagne at the premier black-tie event of the Washington social season, the National Symphony Orchestra ball," followed by an "elegant dinner and dancing on the roof terrace of Kennedy Center," one of the few places in Washington with power.

Another place that never lost its power was *The Washington Post*. Could this explain, Easterbrook asks, why the *Post* was so tender in its comments about Pepco's performance? Just how miserable that performance was is suggested by a comparison with Duke Power, which reinstated full service in North Carolina in three days even though that's where the brunt of the storm hit. It took Pepco eight days.

Grubbing for Grubman

Back to Wall Street for a moment. Did you know Jack Grubman is still being paid $200,000 a year by Solomon Smith Barney? What's more, two loans by the firm to Grubman valued at $15 million are being forgiven. Why should Grubman be rewarded? His inflated stock picks cost investors zillions while he was getting rich on investment banking fees from the companies whose stocks he was touting.

So now you're as indignant as I am. So why the payoff? It's to buy Grubman's "cooperation" with Solomon Smith Barney "in regard to any past, present, or future legal or regulatory issues," reports *The Wall Street Journal*. In other words, the firm is being sued for its complicity in Grubman's misdeeds and the fellows need to be sure to have their stories straight when they go to court.

How about a pre-nup?

In its "engagement" letter to a new client, PricewaterhouseCoopers said, "we will bill you for out-of-pocket expenses, including travel." What the prestigious accounting firm did not tell the client was that it got rebates from airlines, hotel and rental car, and credit-card companies. The client paid for travel expenses at pre-rebate rates. PricewaterhouseCoopers was then paid the rebates by the airlines, etc. Did it give the rebates to the client? Of course not.

Taken for granted

William Robertson is my new hero. He's suing Princeton to get back $525 million that his family foundation has given the university's Woodrow Wilson School for Public and International Affairs. His reason for the suit—and the reason I'm all for it—is that Princeton officials knew that the money was given "to send students into federal government, and [the school has] ignored us." Robertson's foundation pays each student's entire tuition. Princeton could easily require federal service in return for the tuition, but it does not. The result, reports Michael Powell of *The Washington Post*, is that "year after year, the [graduate] school has churned out bright young men and women who go to work in non-profit agencies and universities and private industry—just about anywhere but the federal government."

This government desperately needs these bright people. Unfortunately, what is true at Princeton is true at practically every other prominent school of public affairs. At best, only a small percentage of graduates go into government. What's sad about all this is that, if they got there, they'd find, as I did, that there's a lot of interesting and challenging work, plus the enormous satisfaction of serving the public interest. So, why not encourage them to try it out by making any tuition subsidy dependent on their spending at least three years or so in Washington?

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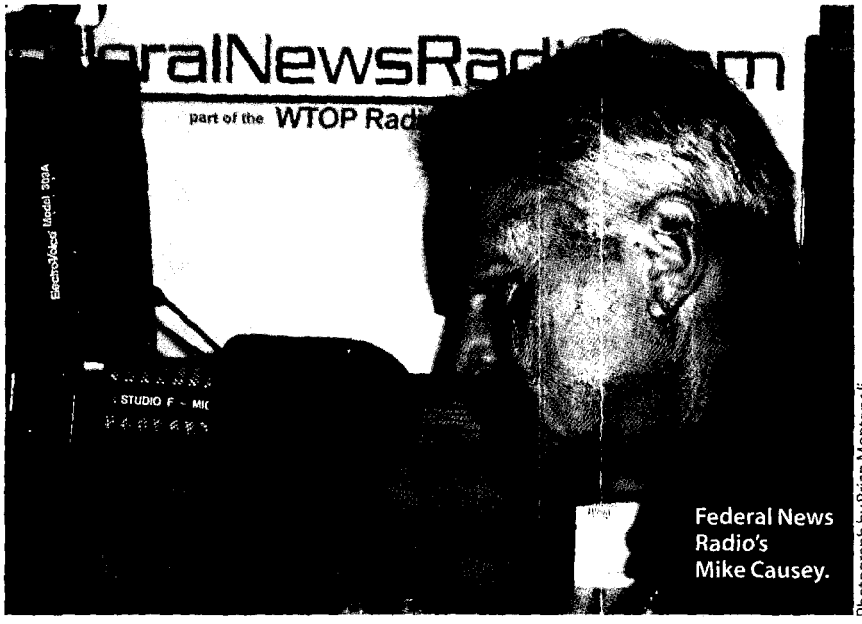
"...such district (not exceeding ten miles square)...[shall] become the seat of the government of the United States."
—THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNITED STATES



Federal News Radio's Mike Causey.

Photograph by Brian Montopoli

Radio Free D.C.

News, traffic, weather, whiny bureaucrats.

By Brian Montopoli

Every Monday morning for the past 18 months, Mike Causey and Marlis Majerus have sat down in a small studio on the third floor of a nondescript office building in Northwest Washington to broadcast a live show on Federal News Radio. Causey and Majerus's show, "Your Turn," is, in theory at least, a call-in program. But five minutes before show time on this early October morning, it's clear that Causey and Majerus haven't had much practice working the phone lines. There is no sound coming through the pair's headphones, making it impossible for them to hear callers. Despite her feverish efforts, Majerus hasn't been able to figure out how to adjust the knobs and dials in front of her to fix the problem. Eventually, a studio technician comes to her aid before the show begins. Says Causey: "We don't get many calls."

But that doesn't mean no one's listening. Federal News Radio (available online at federalnewsradio.com) is a three-and-a-half-year-old venture grandly billed as "the world's first Internet only all-news radio station and Web site covering world and national news with a particular focus on the Federal Government." Federal News Radio's sister station WTOP rebroadcasts some of FNR's segments. But the vast majority of FNR's approximately 50,000-70,000 listening each day through computers are federal workers whose bosses are often tuning into the same show down the hall. As a result, most feds resist the temptation to call in: Sounding off on the air may be good therapy, after all, but it's probably not the best career move.

So instead, they work out their anger via email. Causey receives more than 50 messages in his inbox each day, most of them in response to whatever topic he's addressed in his daily column, which he discusses on

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air. Lately, most of the emails he's received have ranged from quiet worry to panic over the White House's plans to outsource many federal jobs—a move which would cost many of FNR's listeners their livelihoods. Over the past three years, the administration has instituted a system that identifies specific federal positions which are candidates for privatization and notifies their holders. "[Government workers] call it the yellow pages rule," says Causey. "If they can find your job in the yellow pages, then your ass is outta here." Roughly 450,000 federal jobs have now been identified as targets for competition from private companies, according to Paul Light, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a professor of public service at New York University. Now, it's starting to actually happen, and workers in all corners of government are certain that they will be the next to go. The Halliburton contracts in Iraq have been a big item of complaint for feds writing into FNR: They're convinced, Causey says, that the administration is more interested in paying back political allies than taking care of their own. Federal unions have begun running anti-outsourcing ads, and the number of calls on the topic to FNR has skyrocketed.

On the air, Majerus is reading an email from a federal worker named Jeanne. In order to protect Jeanne, Majerus does not share her last name with listeners.

"I want someone to explain why outsourcing is such a great idea," Majerus reads, taking a sip of her water. "Government is complicated, and it takes years to gain the knowledge and expertise to do what we do. How can they be so willing to throw away or disregard the qualified work staffs they now have on board?"

There are about 400,000 federal workers and retirees in the D.C. metro area—and thousands more if you count employees at those agencies, like the C.I.A., that don't officially divulge the number of people on their payrolls. The station is most popular with employees at the Treasury Department, National Institutes of Health, and the Department of Defense. Pentagon workers are responsible for more of the emails hostile toward the administration than any other department, FNR officials say.

Snarky observers might speculate that those federal employees who have time during the working day to listen to a talk radio station *deserve* to have their jobs outsourced. Indeed, Federal News Radio's listeners tend to be the federal system's office managers and human-resource specialists—those concerned more with retirement plans and healthcare options than issues of high policy. And FNR knows how to serve its audience.

The station generates about 70 percent of its content itself, with the remainder coming from the Associated Press (small portions also being taken from WTOP and CBS Radio). The station runs short segments (in distinctive, rat-tat-tat "you give us 22 minutes, we'll give you the world" radio-news ticker style) tailored to bureaucrats, with breaks for commercials similarly targeted to federal workers. (Geico offers special deals on car insurance to government officials.) This gives the station a certain quirky, charming obscurity, filled with the sorts of stories that are vastly interesting to federal bureaucrats, and some-

TIDBITS& OUTRAGES

The other 49 states don't really *need* safe airports

When the Bush administration recently proposed privatizing air traffic control at dozens of airports around the country, Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska), chair of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, intervened to get his state's two major airports taken off the list, explaining "airplanes take right off towards my hotel room...it's an interesting experience, and I want to make sure everything is done right in that field."

That's "The Nation's Paper," all right:

USA Today placed the following job listing on the Web site of the American Copy Editing Society: "Looking for a conservative who ca [sic] work to achievie [sic] consensus with a diverse editorial board."

He had last-minute doubts about the candidate:

Carl Miner of Blytheville, Ark., thought he was a shoe-in for a seat on the Mississippi County school board, since he was running unopposed. Unfortunately, not a single person voted—including Miner.

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The Washington Monthly's

Monthly Journalism Award

Mike Allen and Dana Priest

"Bush Administration Is Focus of Inquiry; CIA Agent's Identity was Leaked to Media"
The Washington Post
September 28, 2003

In this story and several others by Allen which followed it, Allen and Priest revealed that the CIA had asked the Justice Department to investigate which White House sources reported the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame to syndicated columnist Robert Novak in retribution for Plame's husband, former Ambassador Joseph Wilson, accusing the administration of over-selling the link between Iraq and third world nuclear merchants. The piece, groundbreaking and deep, built upon an investigation into a story most of Washington's pack journalists had given up on. It prompted a string of editorials from news outlets around the country calling for an independent investigation into the Plame affair. But all of this prompts a vexing question: Why did it take Allen and Priest's story to spur all those eager editorialists into action? The only new information their story uncovered was the Justice Department investigation. The facts of the case had been made public months before.

The Monthly Journalism Award is presented each month to one or more newspaper, magazine, radio, or television stories (or series of stories) that demonstrate a commitment to the public interest. We are particularly interested in reporting that explains the successes and failures of government agencies at all levels and of other institutions such as the media, corporations, unions, and foundations that contribute to the existence or solution of public problems. Please send nominations (including a copy of the article or broadcast text) to The Washington Monthly Journalism Award, 733 15th Street, NW, Suite 520, Washington, DC 20005. Or email us at editors@washingtonmonthly.com.

what less engaging to the rest of us.

Listeners tuning into Mike Causey's report on the Friday before Columbus Day heard him waxing poetic on the "drama and theatrical aspects of the year 2004 federal pay raise."

A short news segment asked whether workers knew "that there's a federal agency designed solely to assist government agencies with the procurement process?" Not only is there one, the narrator intoned, but it's online at govworks.gov.

Then came a brief report reminding those federal workers who were planning on charging their superiors with discrimination that they needed to contact a counselor "within 45 days of the discriminatory events"—or else courts would throw the claims out.

Federal News Radio's undisputed star is Causey, a self-effacing, silver-haired 63-year-old with a deep baritone and an even deeper knowledge of almost everything of interest to federal workers. Causey, who wrote the "Federal Diary" column at *The Washington Post* for more than 20 years before coming to Federal News Radio, doesn't always take on the sexiest of issues—recently, he discussed the state of healthcare premiums and the intricacies of Office of Management and Budget Circular No. A-76 (Revised) on the air—but his straightforward, no-frills approach has resonated with feds.

"He's like a rock star for federal workers," says WTOP Vice President Jim Farley. "They come up at conventions and can't believe it's really him."

Causey prides himself on not being alarmist: He's long been critical of the media for overstating the problems faced by federal workers. But he believes that his listeners are right to be concerned about privatization—and civilians probably should be, too. Light has stated that there is little solid evidence that outsourcing actually produces cost savings and that rashly made cuts can undermine the efficient delivery of services. Outsourcing does, however, yield one important political result: It puts money in the pockets of private contractors, which can then kick some of that cash back to the politicians who gave them the contracts in the first place. To be sure, some sectors of the federal work force are rife with inefficiency and dead weight. But it has more than its share of dedicated public servants. Causey is dedicated to them.

"I think the typical fed wants to ask Tom DeLay why he doesn't replace the federal workers who guard the Capitol," says Causey. "That cop who was killed—remember that cop who got killed guarding the Capitol? He was a federal worker. He gave his life for the country. I don't know if some guy from Brinks would do that. There's a patriotism in feds that people don't recognize."

Brian Montopoli is a Washington, D.C., writer.

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Spinning Hurricane Isabel

The ideological significance of fallen trees.

By Sandy Bergo

On a beautiful fall morning, not long after Hurricane Isabel blew through the Washington area, a shuttle bus trundled down a street in suburban Maryland where most residents had been without electricity for several days running. Inside the bus, a man and a woman, seated apart but joined by ideology, complained bitterly about the continued power outages, which they attributed to incompetence and corruption on the part of local Republicans.

If he were governor of Maryland, the man said—instead of the Republican who is, Bob Ehrlich—he'd give Pepco, the local utility, 24 hours to get power restored, or take over and do it himself. The woman agreed, but said President Bush was also to blame, for caring more about spending billions to rebuild Iraq than needs here at home. Bush is more interested in invading countries, she said, and killing people. The Republicans were "incompetent" and "idiots," they loudly agreed.

Thus provoked, a man sitting directly across from the woman joined the debate with an opposing view. "You can find idiots anywhere," he muttered. "Even riding a bus."

This, the woman responded, was precisely the kind of thing she expected to hear from "the right wing."

The second man told her to just shut up. She declined, citing her "First Amendment rights" and inclination to exercise them.

Her interlocutor was not convinced, insisting that she did not have the right to offend a bus filled with people, and that there were better ways to express her opinion.

"How?" she wondered aloud.

"Politely, and quietly," he responded.

Her answer, laced with mildly foul language, was that politeness will get you nowhere.

At this point, the argument took an uglier turn. The man, identifying himself as Irish American, told the woman, who herself spoke with an Irish accent, that he was "ashamed" to share ancestry with her.

She remarked that she did indeed hail from the Emerald Isle, in fact the northern portion thereof, and was proud of it.

He intimated that perhaps she was responsible for some of the violence there.

She'd never set off a bomb there, the woman replied, "but now I wish I had."

The other passengers began looking around for exit doors, as the man continued to needle her with ethnic slurs.

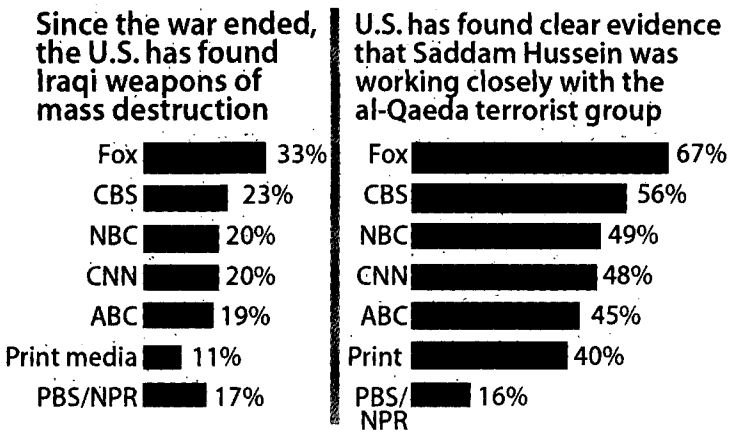
Finally, the man told the woman to express her opinion where it counts, at the ballot box. But he, too, was frustrated by a lack of power. As the bus pulled up to the Metro train station, he issued a parting shot: Until a few months ago, he carried a badge, he told her. If he had one today, "you'd be under arrest."

Sandy Bergo is a freelance writer and former TV investigative producer.

Getting It Wrong on the Iraq war

Poll shows many Americans have misperceptions about key facts of the Iraq war

Primary news source for those who believe:



Source: PIPA Knowledge Networks Poll of 3,334 adults, June-Sept 2003, 1.7% error margin.
Graphic based on chart from KRT

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WHO'S WHO

The weekend before the California recall, Gov. **Gray Davis**'s campaign appealed to several Democratic presidential candidates—including **Wesley Clark, John Kerry, Howard Dean, and Dick Gephardt**—to come to Los Angeles for a unity rally, scheduled for the Monday before election day. Davis's aides promised the candidates that the governor's poll numbers were tightening up, and that a show of support from the presidential contenders would push him over the edge. But a little research revealed that Davis's new poll had been taken on Friday and Saturday, a notoriously unreliable period in which to do surveys. None of the candidates showed up.

Bush's decision last month to transfer responsibility over postwar Iraq from the Defense Department to the National Security Council was widely (and rightly) seen as a rebuke to **Donald Rumsfeld** and a validation of the president's faith in **Condoleezza Rice**. Whether that faith proves justified will largely be determined by the skills of the four people on the NSC staff who will be essentially running the country through the new "Iraqi Stabilization Group." On the plus side, there's **Gary Edson,** who will be in charge of the Iraqi economy. Edson is known as a master of working the interagency process to come up with creative policy ideas; Bush's merit-based foreign-aid program, for instance, came out of Edson's office. **Frances F. Townsend** will be running counter-terrorism operations at the new group; a career bureaucrat and former advisor to Attorney General **Janet Reno** during the Clinton administration, Townsend is considered super-smart, low key, and non-ideological. **Robert Blackwill**, who will be overseeing the creation of Iraqi political institutions, is a career diplomat who worked in Bush's father's NSC. By most accounts, the problem is going to be **Anna Perez**, who will handle communications for the new effort. "She's the perfect Bushie," says one member of the White House press corps. "Fiercely loyal and closed-minded to a farcical degree." One White House insider notes that Perez worked for **Barbara Bush** and describes her as "tart, not terribly creative, very efficient, with a very good feel for seeing what the big story is going to be. She's so on-message that, even in unguarded moments, she refuses to admit the critics ever have a point"—precisely the kind of thinking, in other words, that got the Bush administration's Iraq effort into trouble in the first place.

Is there something in the water out in Oklahoma? Former Republican congressmen **Steve Largent** and **J.C. Watts, Jr.** never quite lived up to expectations during their brief Washington careers. Former Democratic Sen. **David Boren** managed to get Oklahoma State University to name its veterinary college after him, only to retire soon thereafter to become president of OSU's main rival, the University of Oklahoma. Now Sen. **Don Nickles** (R-Okla.), the GOP whip—who was once so sure of a bright Washington future that he no longer even owns a home in Oklahoma—has decided to retire rather than continue to vie for power with Sen. **Bill Frist** (R-Tenn.), the recently-anointed Senate Majority Leader. Nickles's announcement—and the unexpected decision of Rep. **Ernest Istook** (R-Okla.) to take himself out of the running to replace him—gives Democrats a shot at the seat. Oklahoma recently elected a Democratic governor, and the party already has a majority in the state legislature. Rep. **Brad Carson** (D-Okla.) is already gathering endorsements and money for a campaign.

Can Democratic interest groups unite to oust Bush? The evidence so far does not inspire confidence. Months of squabbling within the labor community over organization and campaign strategy have produced at least two competing groups aimed at raising soft money for grassroots mobilization and independent expenditures. Former AFL-CIO political director **Steve Rosenthal** and EMILY's List president **Ellen Malcolm** are key players in Americans Coming Together, a PAC funded in part by the Service Employees International Union and financier **George Soros**, which hopes to raise up to $80 million for next year's election. But they'll be competing for cash and influence with another labor-oriented group known as Voices for Working Families, launched by **Gerald McEntee**, head of the American

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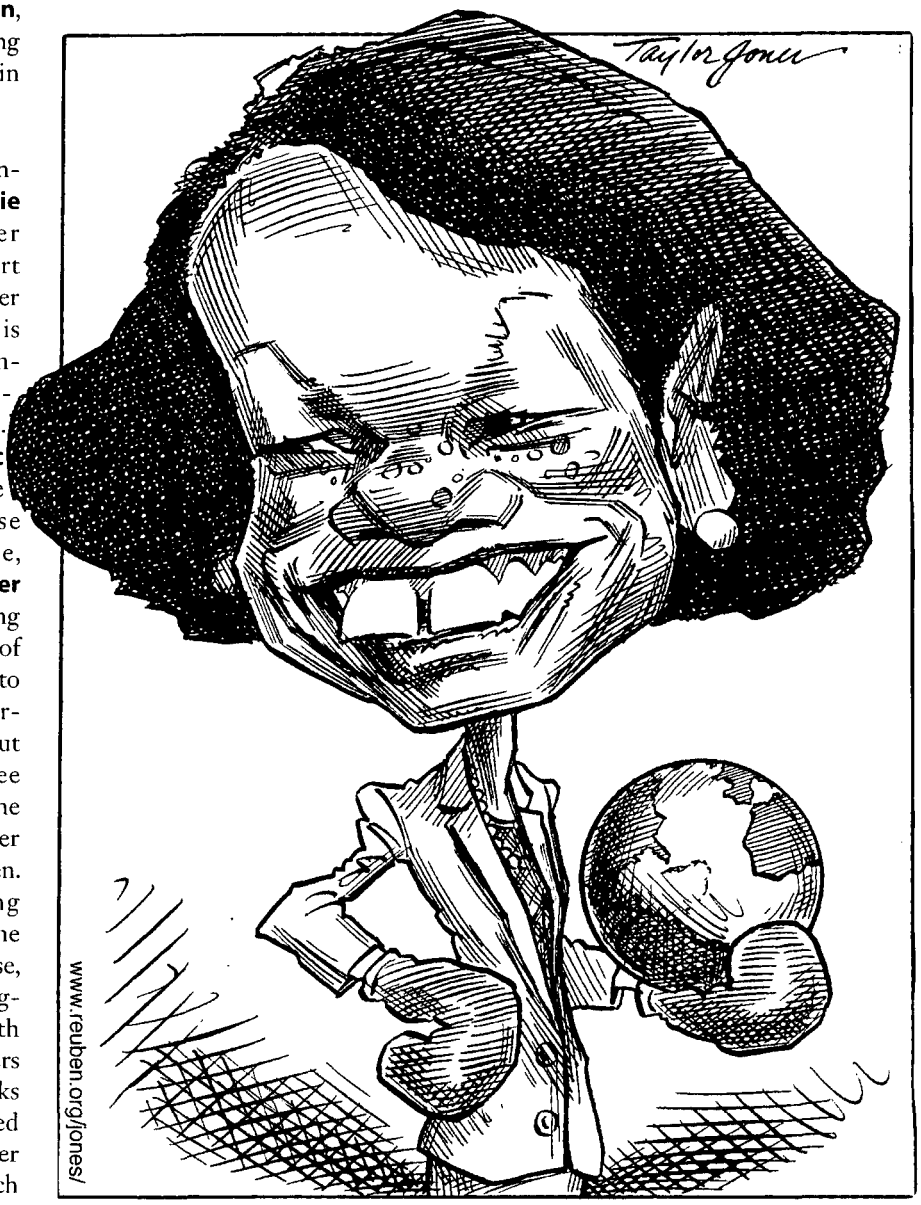
Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees. The latter group hopes to raise about $25 million for get-out-the-vote work; its board includes Gov. **Bill Richardson** (D-N.M.), former New York gubernatorial candidate **Carl McCall**, former NAACP chairman **Myrlie Evers**, former Congresswoman and vice presidential candidate **Geraldine Ferraro**, and AFL-CIO Vice President **Linda Chavez-Thompson**, and it will focus on mobilizing more black and Latino voters in key states.

The outing by senior administration officials of **Valerie Plame**, an undercover C.I.A. counter-terrorism expert and wife of Bush critic and former ambassador **Joseph Wilson**, is undoubtedly the signature example of contemporary GOP vindictiveness. But there are others. For instance, there is **Eric Massa**, until recently on the majority staff of the House Armed Services Committee, chaired by Rep. **Duncan Hunter** (R-Calif.). Massa was a lifelong Republican whose first taste of politics was serving as a page to candidate **Ronald Reagan** during the 1976 presidential race. But before joining the committee staff, Massa had served in the armed forces, where, among other things, he was a top aide to Gen. **Wesley Clark** (Ret.) during Clark's tenure as NATO supreme commander. The two were close, so when Clark came to Washington in early October to meet with Democratic congressional leaders at a private residence a few blocks from the Capitol, Massa walked over to say hello. But as the former comrades-in-arms greeted each other warmly on the street just outside the event—Massa never went inside, say other attendees—Republican operatives stationed nearby noticed his presence, and reported back to his staff director, **Robert Rangel**. Soon after, sources tell "Who's Who," Hunter and Rangel repeatedly told Massa that, given his friendship with Clark, he could no longer work at the committee, but when reporters from a few big-name newspapers heard the story and began calling around, Hunter claimed that Massa had never actually been fired. Fed-up, Massa resigned. No one from Hunter's office was available for comment. Contacted by WW, Massa commented, "I don't hold ill will for anybody. This is about issues, and Clark the man, and I'm going to do everything I can to get him elected."



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MEMO OF THE MONTH

LAWRENCE P. CLINTON, M.D., P.A.
DOV HAMMER, Psy.D., P.A.
HOWARD HAMMER, Psy.D., P.A.
LUISE A. GRAY, Psy.D.

Telephone
[redacted]
Fax
[redacted]

June 5, 2003

The South Jersey Psychiatric Association's meetings for the 2003-2004 year are as follows:

Sept. 9, 2003, sponsored by GSK
Oct. 14, 2003, sponsored by Janssen
Nov. 11, 2003, sponsored by Forest
Dec. 9, 2003, sponsored by Pfizer
Jan. 13, 2004, sponsored by Cephalon
Feb. 10, 2004, sponsored by GSK
March 9, 2004, sponsored by Abbott
Apr. 13, 2004, sponsored by Lilly
May 11, 2004, sponsored by GSK
June 8, 2004, sponsored by Wyeth

More details available in the coming months.

Sincerely,

Lawrence P. Clinton, M.D., P.A.
Child and Adult Psychiatrist
Diplomate of The American Board of
Psychiatry and Neurology

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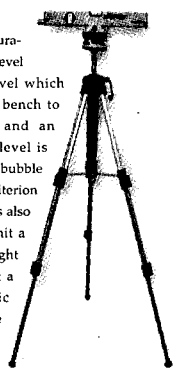

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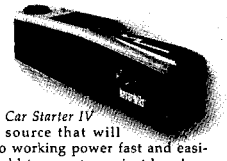

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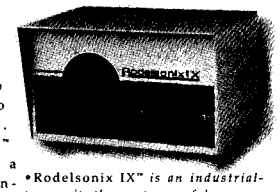

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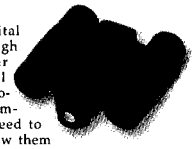

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The Weakest Link

Why the Bush administration insists against all evidence on an Iraq-al Qaeda connection.

By Spencer Ackerman

After weeks of plummeting public support for his handling of postwar Iraq, President Bush took the offensive last month. In a barrage of speeches, Bush and his senior aides argued fervently that the invasion was justified and the United States was making progress on the war's stated aims. But while it's true that the destruction of Saddam Hussein's reign of terror is an unqualified benefit, the rest of the administration's predictions about the war's aftermath have not panned out.

Any post-Saddam euphoria felt by the Iraqi people—who, Vice President Dick Cheney declared before the war, would greet U.S. troops "as liberators"—has given way to ambivalence, as a recent Gallup poll attests; meanwhile, American troops are fighting a protracted guerrilla war in central Iraq which claims, on average, the life of one soldier every day. The administration also promised that our allies would fall into line behind us once the war was over, that Iraqi oil would finance much of the country's reconstruction, and that neighboring despotic regimes would bend to our will. Instead, most of our traditional allies have refused to support our efforts with either troops or money; Iraqi oil production will almost certainly yield insufficient revenue to rebuild the country over the next few years; and Iran has apparently redoubled its efforts to acquire nuclear weapons, while Syria and Saudi Arabia have allowed their own home-grown terrorists to flood into Iraq.

Most importantly, however, the Bush administration's chief justification for the war—that Saddam placed American security in "grave and gathering danger"—has slowly come unraveled. Before the war, the president and members of his administration argued that Saddam had large stockpiles of chemical and biological weapons and an ongoing nuclear program, and that he might provide such weapons to terrorists, specifically al Qaeda, who could then attack an American city and "leave no fingerprints," as Bush put it in a televised address last October. The first part of that equation did not long survive the fall of Baghdad. As actual weapons of mass destruction proved elusive after months of occupation, administration officials began to speak of the existence of weapons "programs." And when, after three months of searching, the 1,200-member team led by David Kay issued an interim report, it indicated that the few remain-ing components of Saddam's pre-Gulf War I weapons programs weren't likely to have yielded actual weapons while international sanctions remained in place. In light of this evidence, the administration resorted to legalisms. Cheney argued in a speech in mid-October that Kay's report "confirms a material breach by the former Iraqi regime of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441." But by abandoning the language of thousands of liters of VX, sarin, anthrax, and plague, at least they were no longer denying the obvious.

That can't be said, however, for the other half of the administration's doomsday scenario: Saddam's reputed partnership with al Qaeda. So intent were some in the White House to convince voters of such a connection that last September, Cheney raised the possibility that Saddam's regime had direct ties to the 9/11 hijackers on "Meet the Press." The speciousness of Cheney's statement was so apparent that the president himself found it necessary to note publicly that there was no evidence of such a link. But administration officials have continued to insist that there were clear connections between Iraq and al Qaeda. Even while distancing himself last

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month from Cheney's notion that Saddam had some role in the 9/11 attacks, for instance, Bush insisted that, "There's no question that Saddam Hussein had al Qaeda ties."

But the evidence for an active link between Saddam and al Qaeda is just as flimsy as the evidence for a reconstituted Iraqi nuclear weapons program. Just as the administration has evidence not of actual WMDs or even programs to manufacture them, but merely possible fragments of WMD programs, neither they have evidence of ties to al Qaeda, but of intentions to have such ties. And the more we know, the more it seems clear that bin Laden was uninterested in any overture from the Iraqi dictator. While most components of the administration's evidentiary case have been debunked, however, the press continues to broadcast its assertions without commentary. As a result, according to a late July *Newsweek* poll, 72 percent of Americans believe that "Saddam Hussein's regime in Iraq was harboring al Qaeda terrorists and helping them to develop chemical weapons." Insisting that such a partnership existed has allowed Bush to present the Iraq war as another battle in the ongoing war on terrorism—the war for which a broad national consensus exists, even as the administration's promises about Iraq fail to materialize.

Nevermind

Saddam was not without involvement in regional terrorism, supporting Palestinian attacks against Israel for years. But nearly every country in the region has done the same, from such rogues as Syria and Iran to such nominal allies as Saudi Arabia. When it comes to international terrorism directed at the United States, however, there is mounting evidence of Saudi complicity, but virtually none on Saddam.

Beginning in the fall of 2002, senior administration officials pointed to a terrorist named Abu Musab al Zarqawi, who runs a group called Ansar al Islam, as the human bridge between Saddam and Osama bin Laden. In his speech at the United Nations last February, Secretary of State Colin Powell charged that Iraq was "harbor[ing]" Zarqawi's group and that Zarqawi himself was "an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his al Qaeda lieutenants." But U.S. intelligence had already concluded last year that Zarqawi's ties to al Qaeda were informal at best. He "occasionally associated with al Qaeda adherents," as *The Washington Post* reported, but Zarqawi was not a "very senior al Qaeda leader," as President Bush had described him in an October 2002 speech. And if Zarqawi's ties to al Qaeda were loose, his ties to Saddam were practically non-existent. Far from being "harbored" by Saddam, Ansar al Islam operated out of northeastern Iraq, an area under Kurdish control that was being protected from Saddam's incursions by U.S. warplanes. Indeed, some of its members fought against Saddam during the Iran-Iraq war. Powell asserted that Saddam dispatched an agent to Ansar to forge an alliance with the Kurdish terrorists. If true, the far more likely explanation, however, is that the dictator had placed an agent in the group not to aid them, as Powell implied to the Security Council, but to keep tabs on a potential threat to his own regime.

If the evidence of a Zarqawi connection is thin, other administration claims are even thinner. Senior administration officials have, for example, continued to assert that 9/11 hijacker Mohamed Atta had met with an Iraqi intelligence official while planning the World Trade Center attacks. The claim is based on an October 2001 report from Czech Republic officials that such a meeting had occurred earlier that year. The Czech report prompted Cheney to declare, in December 2001, that "it's been pretty well confirmed that [Atta] did go to Prague, and he did meet with a senior official of the Iraqi intelligence service." But by mid-2002, F.B.I. and C.I.A. officials who combed through thousands of documents concluded that Atta was almost certainly still in the United States in April 2001, when the meeting is supposed to have taken place. As a result—and reportedly despite Cheney's insistence—Powell's staff excised the claim from his U.N. presentation. Although senior Czech officials stand by the story, many Czech intelligence analysts no longer have confidence that the meeting took place. And for good reason: The allegation has only a single source—an Arab student who, in October 2001, recalled witnessing the meeting after pictures of Atta flooded the airwaves in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. But despite the considered opinion of both American and Czech intelligence that the meeting never occurred, Cheney has continued to assert that the question remains unresolved, telling NBC's Tim Russert that "the Czechs alleged that Mohamed Atta, the lead attacker, met in Prague with a senior Iraqi intelligence official five months before the attack, but we've never been able to develop any more of that yet either in terms of confirming it or discrediting it."

The final piece of alleged evidence the administration presented before the war came in an October 2002 letter from C.I.A. Director George Tenet to Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.), then chairman of the Senate Select Intelligence Committee, stating that "we have solid reporting of senior level contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda going back a decade." But this was at best a disingenuous phrasing, the result of an administration whose senior officials placed significant pressure on its intelligence analysts to reach politically desirable conclusions. The contacts were not, as Tenet's language suggested, ongoing for the past 10 years. Most had occurred during the mid-1990s, in the Sudanese capital of Khartoum. At that time, Sudan's Islamism had sent so many spies and terrorists flooding into Khartoum that the city resembled a jihadist version of the bar scene from *Star Wars*. There, some of the world's most infamous terrorists, such as Hezbollah mastermind Imad Mugniyah, frequently crossed paths with foreign intelligence agents, including, Tenet claimed, Iraq's. But even if Iraqi

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agents had had contact with al Qaeda operatives, notes one former intelligence official, "that's what all intelligence officers do. They try to get in touch with the bad guys, the enemies, and co-opt them in some way, with money or something else"—which is quite different from forging a working relationship. After all, for decades, C.I.A. agents tried to co-opt Soviet officials. That didn't mean Langley spies grew misty when they heard the strains of "The Internationale," nor did it make Kremlin officials long for "The Star Spangled Banner."

Phantom menace

After the fall of Iraq, Americans had a chance to test the administration's claims: Saddam's information ministry, with all its documented secrets, is now in the hands of the Army's Third Infantry Division. Here's what we have: three reports that, together, are not nothing, but almost nothing.

The first was obtained shortly after the fall of Baghdad in April, by journalists for the London *Telegraph* and the *Toronto Star*, who, combing through the ministry's wreckage, claimed to have unearthed documents that describe planning for a 1998 contact between Iraqi intelligence and bin Laden. The papers recommend "bring[ing] the envoy to Iraq because we may find in this envoy a way to maintain contacts with bin Laden." But, rather significantly, the documents "do not mention if any meeting took place," as the Telegraph puts it. (The administration has conspicuously declined to bring up the *Telegraph* and *Star* reports in its own defense, and American news services as well have for the most part ignored them.)

THE GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENCY

An Early Assessment

edited by Fred I. Greenstein

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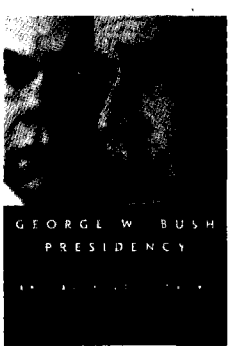

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The second report came from *Newsweek*, which received an administration leak that, similarly, Iraqi official Farouk Hijazi spearheaded an overture to al Qaeda in 1998. Finally, that same year, according to administration officials interviewed by *The Weekly Standard*, Saddam paid $300,000 to Ayman Al Zawahiri, the leader of Egyptian Islamic Jihad who soon afterward became bin Laden's right hand man.

None of these revelations is necessarily surprising in and of itself. Hijazi, for instance, has a powerful incentive to tell his U.S. captors what they want to hear. And by 1998, Zawahiri's Egyptian Islamic Jihad was hemorrhaging money and besieged by Egypt's ruthless security services. Partly as a result, Zawahiri had folded his organization into the cash-flush al Qaeda, believing that such an arrangement was "the only solution to keeping the Jihad organization alive," as one of his fellow Jihad terrorists testified. It's hard to imagine the pauper Zawahiri turning away an open wallet.

But assume that all three reports are true. What do they actually reveal? That around 1998, Saddam's agents tried to build a relationship with al Qaeda. This is, it's worth noting, consistent with the prewar report that Iraqi intelligence operatives had met with al Qaeda terrorists in Khartoum. But the new information is telling in two respects. First, as far as we know, there were no significant contacts between Iraq and al Qaeda after 1998. Second, these Iraqi overtures do not appear to have been reciprocated. According to officials familiar with the debriefings of senior al Qaeda terrorists, especially 9/11 mastermind Khalid Shaikh Mohammed and his deputy Ramzi bin al-Shibh—who, unlike Hijazi, have no hope of gaining release from captivity—bin Laden was simply uninterested in cooperating with Saddam.

In fact, not only is there no evidence of a partnership between Saddam and al Qaeda; there is ample evidence that al Qaeda was actively hostile to Iraqi outreach. Rohan Gunaratna, director of terrorism research at Singapore's Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies and arguably the world's foremost expert on al Qaeda, has interviewed al Qaeda members personally and maintains ties with various national intelligence services. After the U.S. rout of the Taliban, he examined several thousand documents coming out of Afghanistan, including al Qaeda's video collection. After viewing 251 videos, says Gunaratna, "we could not find any evidence of al Qaeda links to Saddam Hussein or the Baghdad administration." Two videos that he watched in particular "speak of [Saddam] as a real monster and not a real Muslim," he adds. "I can't think in those videos Osama ever wanted any kind of association with Saddam Hussein."

Just the facts?

All in all, says an ex-intelligence official who personally viewed the Iraq portfolio during the buildup to the

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war, the administration "never had and still doesn't have any evidence of Iraqi government cooperation with al Qaeda. Zero." The White House, however, continues to insist they do. That the administration knows its evidence is shaky and is beginning to panic is suggested by its latest assertion: In recent weeks, the White House has taken to arguing that, at the least, Hussein did have some connection to the first World Trade Center bombing in 1993. In recent interviews and congressional testimony, Cheney and Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz have noted that Abdel Rahman Yasin, the only one of the 1993 conspirators to escape capture, sought refuge in Iraq. "The one bomber still at-large from the 1993 World Trade Center bombing was sheltered in Iraq for 10 years, and we've learned more about him. The ties were there," Wolfowitz told "Good Morning America," declining to specify what new information he had in mind. Days later, Cheney repeated the claim for Russert: "Now, is there a connection between the Iraqi government and the original World Trade Center bombing in '93? We know, as I say, that one of the perpetrators of that act did, in fact, receive support from the Iraqi government after the fact." But the fact that Saddam gave Yasin shelter after the bombing—perhaps as part of his outreach to terrorists, perhaps to convince the region he remained defiant of the United States—does not tell us whether Saddam was involved in planning the bombing itself. And interrogations of Ramzi Yousef, an accomplice to Yasin now serving a life sentence in U.S. prison, have not produced evidence that Iraq was behind the first bombing, or that al Qaeda, a nascent force in 1993, was then in league with Baghdad. Absent information that the administration hasn't made public, the case for Saddam's involvement in the first World Trade Center bombings is even weaker than the case for his involvement in the second.

It's easy to understand why the Bush administration would continue to cling to its assertion of a Saddam-al Qaeda partnership when virtually all the evidence so far suggests that no such partnership ever existed. For one, the White House hasn't really been forced to back off. While the press and public expected to see weapons of mass destruction on TV—and took notice when they didn't—that hasn't been the case with Saddam's alleged al Qaeda ties. But more importantly, the administration has a powerful political incentive for maintaining that the partnership existed: Public support for the war is largely based on linking Iraq to the overall war on terrorism, and the alleged connection between Iraq and al Qaeda before the war is pivotal to keeping this connection alive. But if there was no real link between Saddam and al Qaeda before the invasion, there is now. Thousands of Jihadists have swarmed into Iraq and are now working with former Baathists to kill American troops. In a neat bit of phrasing, Bush has declared that "Iraq is now the central front" of the war on terror. The significant word in that sentence, of course, is "now." ●

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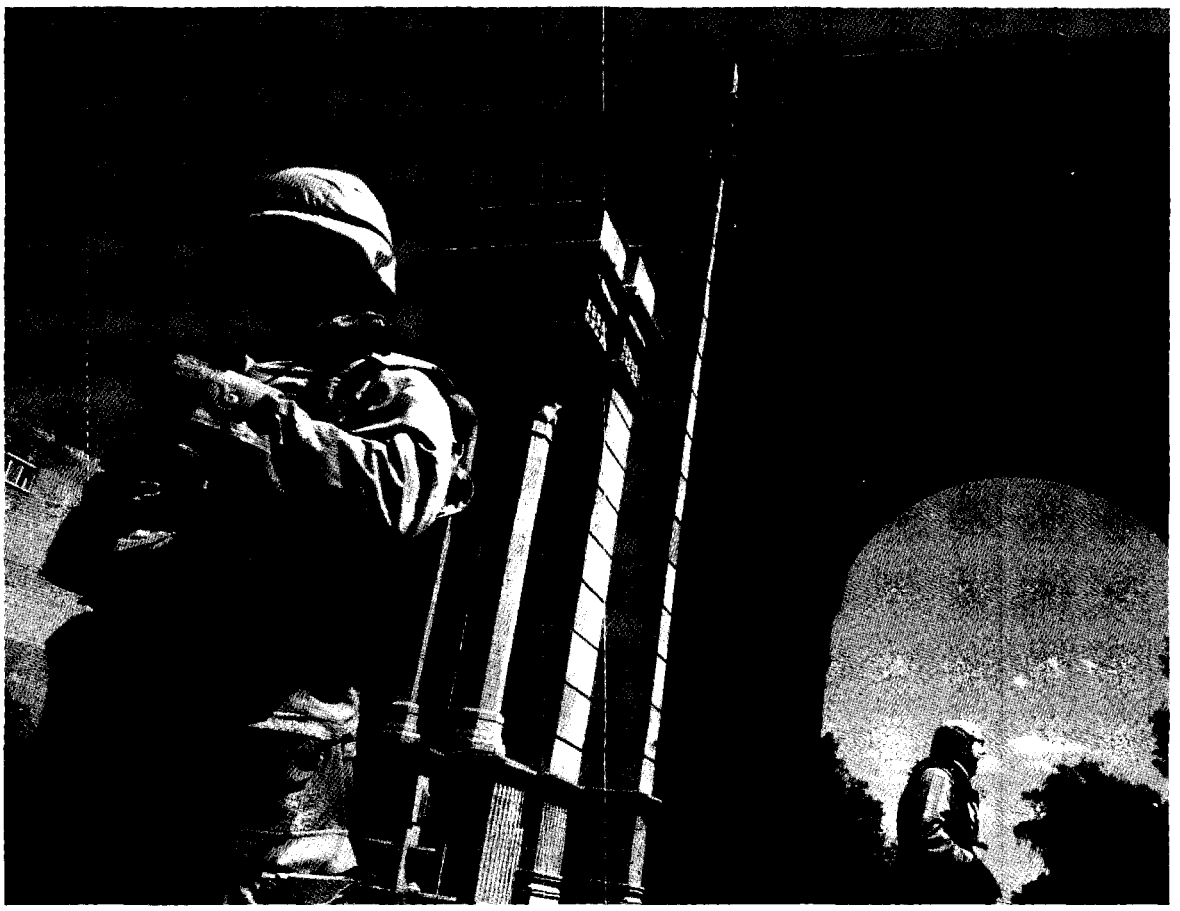

U.S. soldiers are great warriors, but unwilling imperial guards. If we want to secure our interests, we must draw on other sources of power.

By Gen. Wesley Clark

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Last March, somewhere in Kuwait, the troops of the 101st Airborne Division gathered the last of their gear onto trucks that would carry them into war. They were a magnificent sight. All in uniform, taut and fit, talking quietly; their weapons slung over their shoulders; their rucksacks hung neatly along the trucks' rails. The scene reeked of training and discipline, the quiet professionalism of soldiers who have prepped for months and years, who know their moment is at hand. No scene showed more clearly the achievements of the all-volunteer force or the distance our Army had come since the trying days of Vietnam.

In the days that followed, performance lived up to appearance and reputation. Driving through the dust and grit, fighting to clear the built-up areas of Najaf, Karbala, and Hilla, and later surging into the far north of Iraq to work with the Kurds, the 101st burnished the reputation of the American man-of-arms. Fighting, as did those who fought alongside them, with skill, courage, and compassion, controlling their firepower to minimize civilian casualties and limit the destruction of local roads and buildings, this compelling image of force sprang on its nation's citizens, and the world's, like the genie emerging from Aladdin's lamp—unexpected, almost magically powerful.

But they were not only the world's most overwhelming military force. Their presence embodied a powerful political message. As the 101st's troops carved their way through the desert landscape and overcame scattered resistance, they signaled a new American assertiveness, a willingness to risk lives and treasure for our beliefs. The U.S. military was so superior as to be virtually unchallengeable on the field of battle. Perhaps not since the Roman Empire had a single state's power under arms so dominated every possible opponent. In Iraq, the destruction and dismemberment of the enemy's army had been accomplished with vast U.S. capabilities left over. This was a military that could rewrite the boundaries of what force could achieve. This was an armed force that made a new kind of empire appear inevitable. And many foreign policy theorists in and around the White House and the office of the secretary of defense were putting forward the idea that America should embrace its destiny as a new imperial power, using military force as the chief tool to create a more democratic and pro-American world order.

On the eve of conflict with Iraq, President Bush appeared to agree. "A liberated Iraq can show the power of freedom to transform that vital region," he argued in a televised address to the nation last February. "Success in Iraq could also begin a new stage for Middle Eastern peace." The president's vision brought pride to America, reflecting self-confidence in our worth and the superiority of our values. But it all came down to success on the ground: success not just in the military sense, after all, but in a broader sense, one articulated by the president during the last two years. This was to be a new America, reborn from adversity and threat, reaching out constructively to the world, liberating peoples, reforming a "vital region," enabling the emergence of a new, universal morality, and taking advantage of this unique window of American military dominance to secure into the foreseeable future our security and safety. A Pax Americana—and maybe even more—was to fall into place around the globe: a dizzying journey from the "more humble" foreign policy to which Bush had aspired during the 2000 campaign.

But today, such a mission appears to be hanging in the balance. Certainly the United States retains a preponderance of resources—if it can bring them to bear. There is no opposing superpower to stoke the opposition in Iraq, as we did a generation earlier to the Soviets in Afghanistan. But the occupation has thus far failed to meet popular Iraqi expectations in restoring security and minimal economic standards; Saddam Hussein has evaded capture for months; Baathist elements remain hostile; al Qaeda and other Islamic fighters continue to infiltrate the country; and daily sniping attacks, bombings, and ambushes are inflicting more casualties each week upon our people. This resistance is, of course, far from sufficient to defeat the U.S. military on the ground. But it nevertheless casts a deepening shadow.

Our difficulties in Iraq are not just evidence of careless planning for the postwar—though they are that. More fundamentally, they call into question the whole theory that America is capable of—or that it is in our

Gen. Wesley Clark, U.S.A. (Ret.), was Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, from 1997-2000. This article is adapted from his forthcoming book, *Winning Modern Wars*. Copyright 2003. Reprinted by arrangement with Public Affairs, a member of the Perseus Books Group. All rights reserved.

Photo of American soldier guarding the front gate of Baghdad's Republican Palace by Scott Peterson/Getty Images.

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interest to create—an empire founded on force of arms. The American military has never been and probably cannot be made into an imperial force along neo-Roman lines. This is not to say that America lacks sufficient power to defend its interests in the world, including spreading values such as democracy and free-market economics. We've had that power for decades, and wielded it successfully. But while a powerful military has been vital, the chief means of our influence has been an interlocking web of international institutions and arrangements, from NATO to the World Bank to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty. This network of mutual interdependence, though marginalized by the Bush administration, was largely devised by America, which has also been its chief beneficiary. It is, for all practical purposes, a kind of empire—but to use a contemporary term, a virtual one. Properly used and expanded, it can be the secret to a secure and prosperous future.

Return key

As events in Iraq have demonstrated, the main obstacle to an American imperium is that our armed forces, despite their vast strength, have not been built for empire, but for war-fighting. Despite a heritage of frontier service in the American West, they conceived of themselves in Clausewitzian terms, of big battles and maximum violence. During World War I, General John J. Pershing created, with help from the French and British, the modern, European-style U.S. Army, built to occupy terrain and absorb casualties. During World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and afterward, the U.S. armed forces sought an enemy, focused on him, and trained to beat him. These were the forces of 20th-century warfare, of mass armies and the battles of state against state. They targeted enemy forces—and, victory achieved, they wanted to go home. They were citizens first, soldiers second.

The Army has also historically lacked staying power abroad. By the summer of 1919, a few months after the Armistice had ended World War I, Pershing's army was for the most part at home, being demobilized. After World War II, the Army pulled quickly out of Germany and Japan, leaving behind smaller, constabulary-type forces, even in the face of a continuing military challenge from the Soviet Union. Throughout much of the Cold War, U.S. forces abroad were under constant fiscal and political pressures to recall them. Casualties have always added pressure to withdraw, as they did during Vietnam. The better the communications, and the deeper the media coverage, the greater the sensitivity. U.S. operations in Somalia were ultimately undone by the deaths of 18 U.S. soldiers in a single incident. Successful peacekeeping in Bosnia and Kosovo was believed to be contingent on avoiding U.S. casualties altogether.

Moreover, the Army itself has changed since the glory days of the "Greatest Generation." As a consequence of Vietnam, it is now all-volunteer. New technology, which has transferred some of the fighting and destruction to airpower, made the Army smaller overall. Its units lacked the infantry strength, the "boots on the ground" that characterized the draftee armies of the two world wars and even Vietnam. As of 2003, the active-duty Army stands at an authorization of less than 500,000—a little more than half the Cold War force and a paltry 5 percent of the World War II mobilization. Many troops are married. Despite their patriotism, these are men and women who must weigh the call of country against responsibilities to family. Simply recruiting and retaining sufficient soldiers has been problematic. And supplementing the force with more than 100,000 volunteer reservists called to active duty has added to the pressure to finish up overseas and return home as rapidly as possible.

In the summer of 2003, the troops committed to Iraq, around 140,000 plus another 15,000 or so in allied troops, were thin on the ground measured against the recent standards of peacekeeping. In Bosnia in 1996, more than 60,000 NATO and associated soldiers had enforced the cease-fire and peace agreement between the warring factions. The civilian population there was less than 4 million. In Kosovo, there were almost 40,000 peacekeepers in a province of slightly less than 2 million people, in an area roughly 65 miles square. Yet in Iraq, with a population more than ten times more numerous and an area some 80 times greater than that of Kosovo, our troop strength is only about 155,000. Outgoing Army Chief of Staff General Eric Shinseki's concerns, expressed in February 2003, about the size of the force required—"several hundred thousand"—now seem prophetic. Worse, the American force cannot be rotated for refitting, retraining, and recuperation in a "steady-state" fashion. The Army is committed in Iraq—at its peak, more than half the deployable strength of the Army was there. But in Afghanistan, South Korea, Kosovo, and Bosnia are other competing requirements. Any serious rotation would require mobilizing National Guard formations. No matter how great its courage and competence, this is a force whose size, focus, and all-volunteer nature argue against the likelihood that the president's grand vision would succeed.

Nor is our army large enough to follow through on the most expansive visions of the early days in the war on terror, when there was a vision of "taking down states," sweeping across the Middle East, greeted by cheering throngs. Could our military now handle a drive into Syria, and the subsequent duty there, or onward into Lebanon? Certainly, the airpower is adequate, and the ships could pivot offshore—for the airmen and the sailors, any further actions would be yet another extended deployment. But for the Army it is different—they are doing the dirty work in Iraq, day

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after day, amid dangers and uncertainties. Casualties and lengthy, strenuous deployments have struck at the heart of this force. Most of those serving there had believed in the compatibility of their conflicting duties to family and to country. During the fighting, feeling the national sense of engagement, the patriotism, and sense of community involvement, such burdens had seemed bearable. But occupation is another matter altogether. Even if the extended tour of duty is completed successfully, despite the heat and austerity, another call to arms may be awaiting immediately thereafter. There are already stories of helicopter pilots transferred directly from Afghanistan to Iraq. For those that do return home, there will be another rotation to a combat training center, more family separation, births and birthdays missed, wailing children and unhappy spouses. And every casualty strikes a note of fear among the families waiting at home.

Our difficulties in Iraq call into question the whole theory that America is capable of an empire founded on force of arms.

The U.S. Army that defeated Iraq is a great force, unique really—but our soldiers aren't the Roman legions who marched into Brittany, across the Rhine, and conquered England, or the hardy Brits who sought fortune and fame along the Northwest Frontier in 19th-century India. No, these are Americans, unchallengeable in combat, fighting for their country's self-defense, committed to strike back at those who might be responsible for the attacks of 9/11—even though no link between Iraq and the terrorists has ever been established. But they are utterly void of any interest in the gains and glory of occupation duty far from home. Indeed, unless there is a speedy reduction of such requirements there, or a wholesale call-up of the reserves, we might lose the essence of the Army that fought its way so valiantly into Iraq, a casualty not of enemy fire but of over-commitment and under-resourcing, as its soldiers and officers opt out. We simply do not have an Army of empire.

Are we there yet?

The public at home was also ill-prepared to shoulder imperial challenges. 9/11, it's true, sparked the effort to dispatch a mighty force for an unprecedented American action. But soon after Saddam's statues came down, the triumphalism in the media was replaced by more routine dribs and drabs: unusual murder cases, sexual assault charges against a sports icon, mounting concern about the continuing spate of losses falling upon us in the early postwar period. The American people, it seemed, would rally for war. (As a British lord reflected in an earlier century, "War not only supplied the news, it created the demand for it.") But when the uncertainty and excitement of the maneuvers and offensive actions came to an end, public opinion turned away. Americans wanted their troops home—and soon.

And despite all the evidence pointing to the unsuitability of the Army to a long overseas deployment, no extra resources were provided to prepare for a drawn-out campaign. Instead, U.S. foreign policy has become dangerously dependent on its military. The armed forces are now practically the only effective play in the U.S. repertoire. Only they have the personnel, funding, and transportation to deliver relief supplies; organize training for armies and police; install communications and power; advise ministries of justice, health, and finance; build bridges; support election efforts; and inoculate and treat host populaces. Yet such problems are not among their primary missions. The troops often resent being asked to tackle these issues, to which they bring, often very understandably, a narrow, almost mechanical approach. For all their versatility, they lack the knowledge, skills, staying power, and scale to manage seriously a large nation on a continuing basis. They are unable to foment deep-rooted political development. They lack the skills and experience to revise constitutions, rework property laws and criminal statutes, and methodically bore into the deepest aspects of the societies. Troops are not police officers; the kind of investigations and anticorruption efforts essential in nation-building are largely beyond them.

The reliance on the U.S. military feeds another unfortunate trait: the tendency toward unilateralism. In the conduct of military operations, the United States has no peer. No other nation can muster the intelligence capabilities, logistics, firepower, and deployable forces that we possess. But by neglecting diplomatic levers and exhausting other international alternatives, the Bush administration has left itself without the numbers to effectively secure our gains. When, after capturing Baghdad, the military tried to impose security, it lacked sufficient forces to do the job—it simply couldn't occupy the breadth of the country, search for weapons of mass destruction, and simultaneously guard the immense spread of civil facilities and infrastructure needed for the successful transition to an authentically Iraqi government. And when they went "onto the offensive" by conducting sweeps and searching homes, they often lacked the interpreters to explain to families what they were doing and why—a classic mistake in a counter-guerrilla effort. They offended local leaders, and swept up the innocent and uninvolved. Even straightforward self-defense, like returning fire if fired upon, cannot but over time inflict even more casualties

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upon innocent civilians, as well as arouse popular anger that will be very hard to assuage.

As of today, the best hope seems to lie in turning over political authority to a selected Iraqi council as rapidly as possible, and securing a new U.N. mandate which would provide the legitimacy needed for other nations to send in troops and provide financial assistance. At the same time, we ought to create sufficient Iraqi security forces to relieve U.S. troops—an approach which, in early September 2003, the president finally announced that he was prepared to follow. But even if we are able to significantly draw down the U.S. military commitment in Iraq over the next year or so, our ground forces will have been stretched tight and will likely need several years and unanticipated additional resources to recover fully. So soon after the defeat of Iraq, the vision of U.S. armed forces as the heart of a new empire—as a liberating force sweeping through the Middle East, brushing aside terrorist-sponsoring regimes to create a new American empire of Western-style democracies—seems to be fading fast. The transformation of the region seems a generation away.

Forgoing an empire of arms need not mean forsaking our leadership role in the world.

Sharing the wealth

But forgoing an empire of arms need not mean forsaking our leadership role in the world. Indeed, much of the debate and some degree of the enthusiasm about American empire seemed to misunderstand America's enormous power and its unique place in the world.

The United States had come of age as a world power by the end of the 19th century. Surging in population and wealth, gorged on foreign, primarily British, capital in the decades after the Civil War, the United States by the turn of the century was the world's premier manufacturing power. Simultaneously, we set out to compete as an imperial power, seizing Spanish possessions in the Caribbean and Pacific, dismembering Colombia to create an independent Panama in order to build a canal across the isthmus, fighting a difficult counter-guerrilla campaign in the Philippines to secure control of the archipelago, and mounting a "punitive expedition" across the U.S. border into Mexico in pursuit of the populist Mexican bandit leader Pancho Villa.

But here the American pursuit of classical empire ends, for deep within the American psyche has been the principle of national self-determination, which has asserted itself again and again as the country has charted its international course. Cuban independence was granted in 1902. Repeated U.S. military interventions in Central America and the Caribbean during the first third of the century never resulted in formal U.S. annexation or permanent legal control. Philippine independence was formally granted in 1946. Americans tended, on the whole, to be "leavers," not colonizers. Interests in foreign adventures soon faded, military expeditions were scaled back and withdrawn, and local forces, sometimes with U.S. assistance and advice, took over. The United States had power and influence, yes, and its businesses sought to compete globally for gain, but it was not interested in legal control or classic empire.

Indeed, after World War II, the United States strongly resisted the re-imposition of colonialism in Asia and encouraged decolonization elsewhere. We denied substantial assistance to the French as they sought to regain full control of Indochina and were pressured the Dutch out of Indonesia. We weighed in against the British and French when they invaded Gamal Abdul Nasser's Egypt in 1956 and encouraged the end of colonial regimes and white dominance in Africa, eventually mounting a strong economic campaign that by the mid-1990s had helped end South African apartheid. Unlike most classical colonial powers, we were large and rich in resources. We were much less dependent on foreign trade for our economic development. Rather than finding outlets abroad for surplus labor and capital, we benefited from enormous inflows of foreign direct investment during the railroad boom of the late 19th century. And by the turn of last century, our geography and economic development contributed to form a strong predisposition toward isolationism in U.S. foreign policy.

But in the aftermath of World War II, we fought off a return to the historic tradition of withdrawal, first under the leadership of President Harry Truman and Secretary of State George Marshall, then continuing through General Dwight Eisenhower's presidency. Meanwhile, the value of the extractive industries—gold, diamonds, timber—that motivated earlier colonial efforts by other nations was declining in relative terms. While these industries, and the multinational companies which dominated them, continued to hang on in their market sectors, the terms of trade were shifting. New areas of wealth had emerged in travel, entertainment, medicine, communications, and modern manufacturing. Value in these areas for the most part was not achieved by dominating sources of supply but by access to markets and attracting foreign capital and talent.

The United States has continued to draw waves of immigrants hungry for freedom and economic opportunity—from the 19th-century Germans, Irish, and Italians onto the early-20th-century East Europeans, to a steady flow from Puerto Rico, Mexico, Cuba, and then Central America, as well as from the Middle East and

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South and Southeast Asia. During the 1990s, the United States experienced the highest population growth rates of any developed country, largely because it received more than a million immigrants per year, becoming, by 2001, home to more than 3 million Muslims of Middle Eastern and Asian origin.

At the beginning of the 21st century the United States is the world's leading economy, accounting for about 20 percent of global output and, during the period 1995-2002, for about 40 percent of the world's economic growth. Over time the world economy has become disproportionately dependent on the U.S. growth engine, which has led to the strange result that the United States must consume more than it produces—while much of the rest of the world must produce more than it consumes. This is a benefit to other countries, which must find markets for their products, but it is most of all a benefit to ordinary Americans. No previous preeminent power has done so well, either in creating wealth for itself, or in sharing the benefits with others.

Waging peace

This was sustained not by a classic empire but rather by that interlocking web of international institutions and arrangements that protected and promoted American interests and shared the benefits, costs, and risks with others.

First came the security arrangements which emerged after World War II. Committed to deterring and containing the Soviet threat, America stationed hundreds of thousands of troops abroad—but much of the expense was borne by the recipient countries themselves, especially in Asia. The majority of these troops were not scattered across the underdeveloped world, but rather concentrated in the once-devastated, but now highly developed, lands of America's former enemies. Although Congress grumbled continually about costs, the truth was that such deployments provided important contributions to states that had become some of America's principal economic and commercial partners. Joined to them by formal alliances, the United States relieved these nations of some defense burdens, creating supranational interests in security, but also providing a crucial U.S. voice in financial, political, and, ultimately, cultural matters.

Second, the United States exercised leverage through international institutions and arrangements, initially through a frame of security treaties: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for European allies, bilateral agreements with Japan and South Korea. Acting with allies, the United States was able to redistribute the financial, military, and political burdens of its global security interests. In Europe, NATO member states provided most of the ground manpower in the event of war. Independent French nuclear programs provided a backstop for Cold War NATO nuclear decision-making. Britain assisted in the Persian Gulf until the late 1960s. France and Belgium were active in Africa. And Japan not only came to develop surprisingly modern and effective self-defense capabilities; it paid a significant portion of the operating expenses of U.S. forces stationed there.

Finally, there were such arrangements facilitating American economic leadership as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and later the regular meetings of leading economic powers which eventually became known as the Group of Eight (G8). Central bankers frequently met, at least to share perspectives. The United States also used the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to open new markets for U.S. goods, products, and services and was the leader in organizing the World Trade Organization to further regulate and expand international commerce. General agreements were led or accompanied by regional arrangements such as NAFTA—the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada. The dollar became the principal world reserve currency.

When the United States developed balance-of-payments problems in the early 1970s, it was able to shift the international financial system from fixed to floating exchange rates, enabling continued growth of U.S. consumer demand while other nations concentrated on export-led growth to feed the U.S. market. The oil shocks of 1973 and 1979 were absorbed, and then digested, yielding, more than 20 years later, a lower real price of oil, as well as a strong financial bond between the oil-producing and oil-consuming countries marked by reciprocal investments and exchanges of debt. The allure of an integrated U.S. market was so strong that during the 1980s and into the 1990s the United States was able to run enormous federal budget deficits financed by foreign investors and foreign governments' purchases of U.S. bonds. Foreign investments and financing allowed the United States to expand its economy—and strengthen its military—without paying for all of it through taxes. It was partly a matter of economics: The United States was a safe place to invest, and the returns were good.

Soft sell

For decades, the United States has been at the hub of this network of mutual interdependence, sometimes called "globalization." Heavily influenced—some might say dominated—by us, globalization reflected the American values of free-market economics and popular democracy. Enabled by modern communications and transportation, this network facilitated access to markets and investment opportunities abroad, assisted the flow of talent and intellectual property, and fostered the spread of market forces and democratic processes around the world. The major beneficiary of all of this was the United States itself. In short, this "globalization"

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was the new American empire.

But it ran not only on the "hard power" of military security and economics but also on confidence and shared values. This confidence reflected collective judgments about broader U.S. policies at home and abroad, expressed through the multinational institutions the United States helped create after World War II. And it was through and within these institutions, as well as by concrete actions, that values could be demonstrated and confidence sustained.

Our power is sustained not by a classic empire but rather by an interlocking web of international institutions that promote American interests and share the benefits, costs, and risks with others.

The United Nations served as a forum for communications and for addressing international issues less directly related to superpower competition. Its founding and overall design was driven by the United States, attempting to rectify the failures of the post-World War I international system that had led to World War II. Almost immediately, the emergence of the Cold War undercut hopes that the United Nations could serve as a means of collective security. But it did. Support organizations such as the U.N. Development Programme, the Food and Agricultural Organization, and UNESCO assumed extraordinary significance for the peoples of less developed countries. But even more important, the United Nations became the source of international law—for that was the status of U.N. Security Council resolutions. True, it was law without a real sovereign to enforce it—but the legitimacy it carried moved domestic politics in many countries.

The United States ardently used this international system. There were treaties to regulate nuclear and chemical weapons, as well as agreements to regulate exploitation of the oceans and govern all manner of commercial activities. And many of these agreements were underwritten by the creation of monitoring and enforcement mechanisms and organizations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. The United States had representatives everywhere, ambassadors and delegates and officers detailed for periods of service. And, issue by issue, they worked to pursue and secure U.S. interests.

But the American way was not to rely on coercion and hard pressure, but on persuasion and shared vision. To an unprecedented extent, the United States had been benign and magnanimous as a victor of World War II. Sharing international power through the United Nations system, deeply involved in assisting the reconstruction of the German, Japanese, and Korean economies, hosting foreign students and encouraging exchange programs, speaking out against the old colonial empires, receiving immigrants, the United States became a model for nations around the world. American principles expressed in the Bill of Rights inspired others around the world. We were palpably uninterested in classical empire—our motives were consistent with those of dozens of struggling freedom movements around the world. For our potential competitors in the developed world, the combination of U.S. economic strength and American ideals was difficult to oppose. For two-thirds of a century the United States was generally viewed as the most admired nation in the world. To an important degree, American power in the 20th century was what Joseph Nye, dean of the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, calls "soft power," the power to persuade, based on American values. It gave us an influence far beyond the hard edge of traditional balance-of-power politics, based less on physically occupying countries and imposing laws and institutions, or even on wielding our enormous economic and military strength, as old colonialists might have done, and more on leading by example, on transparency, and outreach.

To be sure, throughout the Cold War, the United States sometimes found it challenging to maintain its high principles abroad in the face of the Soviet threat. We gradually lost some of our moral edge, creating adversaries and doubters. Worried about potential Soviet encroachments upon the Middle East, we deposed an Iranian leader and replaced him with an unpopular shah; in Central America, the United States fought for almost a decade against Marxist-inspired governments and guerrillas using C.I.A. and special forces personnel, as well as local movements—a struggle that succeeded, but at enormous human cost, with additional human rights violations and illegal government activities. We often distinguished between totalitarian regimes, which we opposed, and regimes that were merely authoritarian, which could serve U.S. interests—but it was an uncomfortable distinction, never fully accepted across the American political spectrum.

The end of the Cold War removed the source of these contradictions in U.S. policy, leaving the United States free not only to expound principles but also to encourage more directly those that aligned with our values. Conversely, the United States was less constrained in condemning states that habitually violated human rights. This new strain of idealism in U.S. foreign policy was reinforced during the 1990s by U.S. actions to depose a Haitian junta blocking a democratic government there, and by the U.S. military peace

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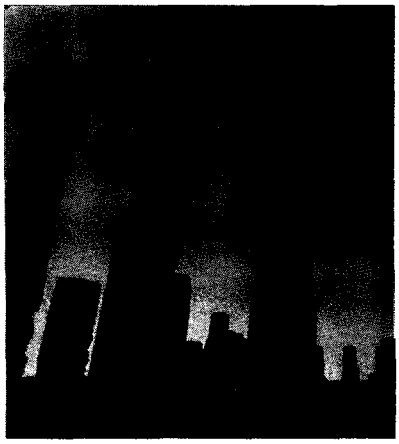

Photo of American soldier patrolling Baghdad at night by Graeme Robertson/ Getty Images

operations in the Balkans, Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

Risky business

But in 2001, recently come to power in a disputed election, the Bush administration acted unambiguously to impose a more unilateralist stamp on U.S. foreign policy. The United States withdrew from international efforts to address global warming, the Kyoto Treaty. The administration made clear that it would proceed with national missile defense regardless of the U.S.-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; the South Korea–North Korea dialogue was essentially rejected; and a new proposal to focus the United Nations on tightening sanctions against Iraq was dropped.

Even before 9/11, it was clear that U.S. foreign policy had changed tack, but responding to those grim events, the Bush administration definitively abandoned its "more humble foreign policy." Overnight the U.S. stance in the world became not only unilateralist but moralistic, intensely patriotic, and assertive, planning military action against Iraq and perhaps other states in the Middle East, and intimating a new American empire. With an American public reeling from the shock of 9/11, the message played powerfully at home, dampening concerns about rising unemployment and the soaring budget deficit. And the risks were discounted. No matter that aggressive unilateralism would hamper counterterror efforts, turn upside down five decades of work to establish an international system to help reduce conflict, undercut the alliance that had maintained security for half a century in Europe, and shake relations critical to maintaining the web of interdependence central to American prosperity. By September 2003, U.S. forces were in Iraq—deeply committed, without as yet a clear strategy either to salvage success or to exit, continuing discussion about possibly expanding the area of military action to include Syria and perhaps other states in the region.

But this shift—rather than promoting the emergence of the new American empire—put all that we gained with "soft power" and the virtual American empire at risk, producing an outburst of worldwide anti-American sentiment. Opinion polls in many nations show substantial numbers who think that "bin Laden was more likely to do the right thing than Bush." These are concerns not about American values or how we live but about how America acts abroad. Because such concerns reflect judgments about American actions, they will not be countered easily by advertising and public relations techniques. And they have already affected the support the United States receives abroad.

Individually, some governments, especially democratic ones which must listen to the opinions of voters, have found it more difficult to comply with American wishes. Turkey, for example, refused to support the passage of U.S. troops in the war on Iraq and as of early September had yet to take up U.S. requests to assist with a peacekeeping force. India declined the request to participate because the mission was not under U.N. control, as did Germany and France. These are only the latest signs of nations beginning to define their own interests in refusing unilateralist U.S. "leadership."

What is emerging is more subtle, a more or less informal constellation of interests among several states, including both allies and former adversaries, to frustrate and complicate U.S. policies and objectives that are increasingly seen at odds with their own interests. Fundamentally, this risks unraveling the political and economic structures of interdependence which have proved so favorable to the United States. In the narrowest sense, if foreigners lose confidence in U.S. leadership and reject the implicit understandings and economic alignments that have led them—especially the central banks of China, Taiwan, and Japan—to accumulate dollar holdings, they could quickly diversify out of dollar assets, triggering a sharp decline in the dollar's value and significantly impairing our recovery.

Somewhere in the rising U.S. budget deficits, the balance-of-payments current accounts deficits, and the growing resentment of the United States abroad, there may be a "tipping point," as yet undetermined, which could be triggered by geopolitical failure on the Kore-

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an Peninsula or in South Asia, a severe oil shock derived from simultaneous domestic failures in several producer countries, or a rapid enlargement of more attractive investment opportunities in China and India, and greater confidence in the Euro, sufficient to choke down the continuing influx of foreign financing. Or we could simply suffer a continuing gradual erosion of our influence.

But if leadership is defined as "persuading the other fellow to want to do what you want him to do," as Eisenhower put it, then American leadership is failing. We simply aren't persuading others to align with our interests—we are coercing and pressuring. If we do not alter our approach, we are headed toward a less powerful and relevant America, regardless of the numbers of stealth bombers we deploy or countries we "access." If this path leads to American empire in the sense of more countries occupied by U.S. troops, it will mean a poorer, more isolated, and less secure America.

Desperately seeking sovereignty

We need to see ourselves and the world around us in sharp relief—and use that vision to inform better our policies. Simply put, the United States needs a new strategy for the 21st century—a broader, more comprehensive, and less unilateralist approach abroad, coupled with greater attention to a sound economy at home, and sensible long-range policies. The Bush administration's strategy of preemption, published in the 2002 National Security Strategy, was focused against Iraq. At home, the formula of the supply-siders—tax cuts for the wealthy to feed trickle-down economics—has about run its course. It is time for America to return to the basic concepts that ensured its unprecedented prosperity and security and to adapt from these a new strategy that can better serve our needs today.

The first of these basic principles should be inclusiveness. The United States represents evolutionary values of human dignity and the worth of the individual—ideals that have steadily swept across Europe and into much of the rest of the world. We have been proselytizers, advocating our values, assisting states abroad, encouraging emerging young leaders to study and visit the United States. During the Cold War we were careful to reach across the Iron Curtain. And when the Cold War ended, we worked hard to encourage the enlargement of democracy around the world. We should be seeking allies and friends around the world.

Second, we should be working to strengthen and use international institutions, beginning with the United Nations and NATO. Such institutions can provide vital support to American diplomacy, bringing in others to share the burdens and risks that we would otherwise have to carry alone. The United Nations especially can contribute legitimacy to U.S. purposes and actions. International law is of little significance to most Americans, but it carries heavy weight abroad. Both the United Nations and NATO need refinement, particularly the United Nations—but these refinements can be made only through American constructive leadership, for we are the lone superpower, with the resources and incentives to do so.

And finally, we must place in proper perspective the role of the armed forces in our overall strategy. We should ensure that they retain the edge over any potential adversary and continue to modernize them to deal with foreseeable contingencies, including the possible need to preempt any threat to the United States. We always have the right of self-defense, including inherently the right to strike preemptively. But force must be used only as a last resort—and then multilaterally if possible.

Operating on these three principles, we should repair our trans-Atlantic relationships. When the United States and Europe stand together, they represent roughly half the world's gross domestic product and three of the five permanent seats on the U.N. Security Council. These are the countries that are most politically and culturally aligned with the United States. We are the major investors in each other's economies. We should turn upside down nineteenth-century Britain's view that Britain had no permanent friends, only permanent interests. In the West, we must have permanent friends and allies and then work to ensure that

Photo of soldier with the U.S. Army 101st Airborne patrolling Mosul, Iraq by Scott Nelson/Getty Images

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our interests converge.

Using this trans-Atlantic alliance as our base, we should then work to resolve our security challenges—the North Korean and Iranian nuclear programs, the continuing threat from al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. We should be working with allies to help settle disputes between India and Pakistan and within the Middle East that could explode into deadly conflict. And we should be pressing through the United Nations and offering assistance to ease the ongoing conflicts in Africa.

Fight smart

Surprisingly, most of the discussions about American empire—as about terrorist threats abroad and our actions to address them—have little to say about America itself. Yet in the wake of 9/11, Americans are seeing themselves in a new way. For the first time in more than a decade, we are aware of the importance of the world beyond our borders, as well as the power of political forces and ideas other than our own. And we are looking at each other differently, too, seeking a community with greater trust and security. And we shouldn't believe that we can meet this challenge without changing in the process. In the immediate outpouring of international sympathy after 9/11, Americans felt a warmth of support that has seldom been so openly expressed abroad. But much of that sympathy has evaporated. Many felt that we were "fixating" on terrorist threats, claiming that their societies had faced this for a generation. But they failed to understand that we are of a different tradition: independent, and determined to restore our sense of security.

The shock, the fear, and the anger will rightly remain embedded in our memories, but now is the time to "fight smart." It is true that we are engaged in "a campaign unlike any other," which may well extend for a long time. This is modern war, and no state or society is better able to wage it than us. We must, however, develop the appropriate strategy and use both the military forces and the full array of means at our disposal. We don't need a new American empire. Indeed, the very idea of classic empire is obsolete. An interdependent world will no longer accept discriminatory dominance by one nation over others. Instead, a more collaborative, collegiate American strategy will prevail, a strategy based on the great American virtues of tolerance, freedom, and fairness that made this country a beacon of hope in the world.

America's primacy in the world—our great power, our vast range of opportunities, the virtual empire we have helped create—has given us a responsibility for leadership and to lead by example. Our actions matter. But we certainly cannot lead by example unless we are sustained by leadership. ◆

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By Benjamin Wallace-Wells

The Jacksonville unit of the North Carolina National Guard held its mobilization ceremony on the lawn of the local armory during an unseasonably chilly day last month, and even the town cut-up came, a shambolic, gray bearded, big bellied man. He was wearing a neck brace so loosely fashioned that it looked less like a helpful medical device than a prop from a high-school play, and at 10 o'clock on this soberingly cold morning, he seemed drunk. Five minutes before the ceremony began, he lurched past the microphone: "Don't worry," he called out to the crowd, "I'm not the guy who's speaking." Most of the crowd giggled nervously, embarrassed for him. The company, 120 men standing in columns behind four sergeants, listened to speeches from a half-dozen local dignitaries about the importance of their mission, the pride the community had in them. Then a member of the company stepped up to the microphone with a black acoustic guitar and sang "I'm Proud to be an American" in a high, country-styled voice.

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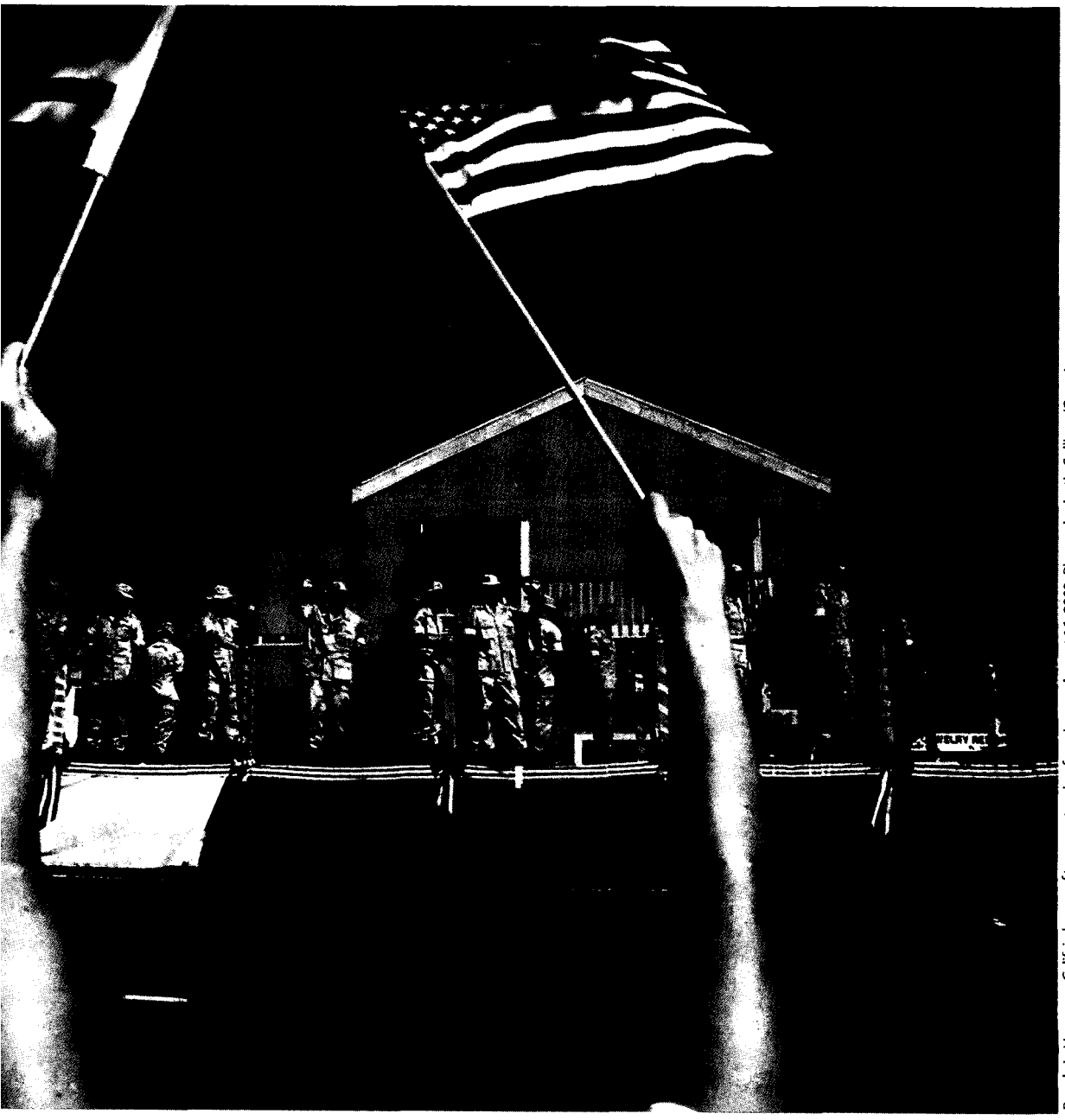
wo decades, the bond between the GOP
.S. military has been getting stronger.
nvasion of Iraq, that may be changing.



Parade in Livermore, Calif., in honor of troops returning from Iraq on August 16, 2003. Photos by Justin Sullivan/Getty Images

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There's a line in the chorus that goes "I gladly stand up next to you/ and defend her still today," and when the singer hit "stand up" for the first time, the soldiers stiffened to attention. On the second chorus, the officers and dignitaries who had addressed the soldiers stood up, as one. The third time through, the crowd itself, a ragtag bunch that had come in run-down pickups and Trans Ams, stood up together, with military precision, with no prompting. I looked over at the town cut-up; his fingers were clutching his temples, and he was bawling his eyes out, loudly and unabashedly.

These are deep bonds. In an all-volunteer army buttressed by a volunteer reserve, soldiers don't fight simply for abstractions. When soldiers find themselves in tough spots, they tend to find solace and vigor in the conviction that they are fighting not just for their president or vague notions of patriotic duty, but for specific civilians they know from their hometowns, and that in battle they are defending the freedoms of the people they grew up with. The American military is composed of thousands of men and women who have made these deeply personal, I-and-thou contracts with their friends and families: The soldiers promise to die, if needed, to defend your freedoms, and the civilians promise to honor them.

In this section of coastal Carolina, fewer than 30 miles from the Army's Fort Bragg, the Marines' Camp Lejeune, and the Air Force's Seymour Johnson Base, these promises are made more frequently and taken more seriously than in most places around America. It is the presence of the military and their willingness to sacrifice that give this town its sense of its own values, that it is more than just another section of sprawling, strip-malled blacktop. It gives citizens the sense that everything they do to support the troops has deep import. In this deeply Southern town, a visitor comes across the unlikely sight of a white grandmother volunteering to pay for the meals of a couple of off-duty black enlisted men who are eating in the local Bojangles fried chicken joint. At the mobilization ceremony I attended, an old man with a veteran's cap told his grandson importantly, "Four companies in a battalion, four battalions in a regiment." And a sergeant acting as usher asked a lanky young man whether he was here with any families or friends with whom he wanted to sit, but the young man said no, "Just here to support."

Six months ago, that patriotic support extended to President Bush and the Republican Party. This section of coastal Carolina is staunch GOP territory, with Rush Limbaugh on the radio and flag decals—American mostly, but a few confederate—on the back of the pick-up trucks. "That's the recent tradition here—being a patriot and supporting the military means being a Republican," says Lockwood Phillips, publisher of the *Jacksonville Daily News* and conservative host of the local political call-in show. The Third Congressional District, which includes Jacksonville, gave President Bush a 23-percent margin over Al Gore in 2000, and even favored Bob Dole over Bill Clinton by 15 percent in 1996. Six months ago, you simply didn't hear anything against Bush in Jacksonville, and if people had doubts about the war in Iraq, they kept them to themselves.

But these attitudes have begun to change. The local newspaper's editorial board, which has been vocally pro-Bush throughout his administration, ran an editorial at the beginning of October criticizing the administration's policies on Iraq, and suggesting that the campaign could end in a Vietnam-like quagmire. Soldiers' wives ask reporters why their husbands are still being sent off to Iraq, to face car bombs and chaos, months after the president said the war was over. Returned reservists, who saw their return dates pushed back again and again while they sat in a chaotic war zone, call the same radio station to say they didn't sign up for this sort of treatment, and they won't be reenlisting. If pressed, most people you talk to around here still say they'll support Bush. But their faith in him, and the GOP powers in Washington, has been rattled. "I'm a strong Republican, but the Republicans have been the problem; we've been treated like second-class citizens," a retired Vietnam Marine helicopter gunnery sergeant named Don Beaver told me in North Carolina. Elsie P. Smith, the town's Republican mayor, says: "There's a few people who have become very hostile [towards the Bush administration]... the longer the war goes on, the more of that subtle shift you're going to see."

This subtle distancing of Republicans from Bush has begun to show up, locally and nationally, even among those conservative politicians who spent this administration's first two years hugging the president as if their political future depended solely on the strength of their grip. Rep. Walter B. Jones Jr, (R-N.C.), Jacksonville's man in Congress, has joined other pro-military conservatives in stepping out of line with House leaders and criticizing the administration's policies towards veterans; Jones has said the administration treats vets like "second-class citizens." Conservative Rep. Zach Wamp (R-Tenn.) and Sen. George Voinovich (R-Ohio) led vocal Republican opposition to the administration's $87 billion supplemental spending bill for Iraq in September, a move which found conservative allies from Sen. Kay Bouley Hutchinson (R-Texas) to Sen. Sam Brownback (R-Kan.). House majority whip Roy Blount (R-Mo.) has taken the administration to task over its troop-rotation policies.

A similar mood is emerging in small, patriotic towns around the country. According to a study conducted in mid-

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October by *Stars and Stripes*, half of American soldiers in-country say their units have low morale, that they were insufficiently trained, and that they won't reenlist. The ubiquity of email in Iraq means that husbands, wives, families, and friends of these troops have a mainline to these gripes, and to the day-to-day grit and threat of combat, that they haven't had in previous wars. Holly Rossi, whose husband, Rob, is an Army reserve engineer out of Londonderry, N.H., has watched the Family Support Group for his unit, wives who started the war as staunch pro-Bush patriots, come to doubt the political mission. "A lot of people feel tugged. We have built our lives around . . . patriotism no matter what, but we're feeling very abandoned." Charles Carter, a retired Naval chief petty officer, told *Knight Ridder*: "I will vote non-Republican in a heartbeat if it continues as is."

Carter's opinion is representative. While the GOP hasn't lost the military vote, if present trends continue, it could see substantial defections in one of its core constituencies. Even small numbers can swing an election. Almost all observers concede that heavily Republican overseas ballots, with much of the margin coming from military personnel, handed Florida, and the presidency, to Bush in 2000. Some of the most closely contested states in the last election have the most dense populations of military voters: Tennessee, Missouri, Ohio, Arkansas, Nevada. But beyond the military voter is an even larger electoral bloc: tens of millions of "national security voters," who are not themselves necessarily connected to the military, but who judge a president's capacity to defend the country by how well he treats the troops, and by how much the troops support him.

The administration, armed with a new U.N. mandate, has recently begun a new effort to solicit money and troops from other nations, while maintaining that it is not willing to turn over control of Iraq. Unless these efforts are successful enough to permit the administration to withdraw large numbers of troops and unburden itself of the financial responsibility for reconstruction, the White House remains in an unenviable position. To quell the uproar among its own ranks, the administration will be strongly tempted to pull back troops and slight investment in Iraq. But that will almost certainly undermine the administration's stated policy of democratizing Iraq and, through it, the region. If, on the other hand, the White House chooses to maintain high levels of aid and manpower in Iraq, it risks fracturing the GOP and losing the 2004 election. Either way, the searing experience of young soldiers in Iraq today will likely have profound effects in coming years on the GOP's foreign policy and on the military's attitude toward civilian authority.

Voting right

Trying to suss out the voting patterns of the military, and the ways in which their professional frustrations and satis-

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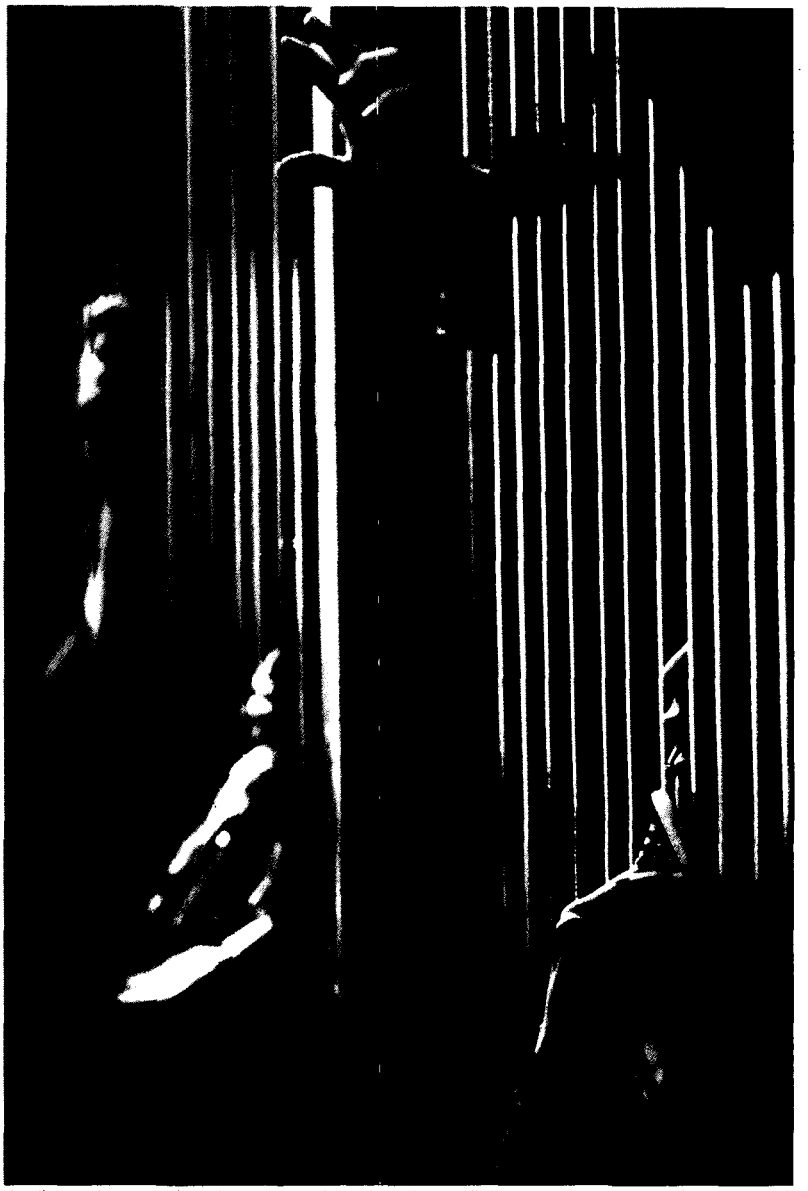

Family members wait behind a gate while the USS Abraham pulls into port on May 2, 2003 after a 10-month deployment to the Persian Gulf. Photo by Sandy Huffaker/Getty Images.

factions spill over into politics, has always been a murky, Kremlinology-like game. The Department of Defense, which since 1955 has had an office designed to promote voting among the military and track participation rates, does not keep statistics on how many soldiers vote Democrat or Republican, though it does know that they vote at slightly higher rates than average Americans. And ever since shortly after World War II, when academics first became numerous and frisky enough to want to poll soldiers, there have been laws making it illegal to do so. Scholars who study the politics of the military rely on what scraps of data they can assemble, and then, squinting, try to understand a pattern. They look at surveys of the political attitudes of high school seniors, cross-referenced by whether the students plan to go on to college, to work, or to the military. They note those national opinion surveys which ask participants whether or not they are veterans. They rely on the non-political surveys of the social and cultural attitudes of the military. They scan absentee-ballot returns in search of discernible patterns of military voting. Mostly, they talk to soldiers in the field and develop, over the course of their careers, anecdote-driven, rough senses of how soldiers are likely to vote. But the consensus view seems to be that the military as a whole votes Republican by a margin of slightly less than 2-to-1, with enlisted men and women Republican by 3-to-2, and Republicans outnumbering Democrats among officers by 8-to-1. (Thankfully for Democratic partisans, there are 15 times as many enlisted men as officers). Scholars know even less about how the military has voted in the past. But they have established a broad narrative of the demographics and shifting historical cultures of the military that helps explain its evolution as a political entity.

For the first half of the 20th century, the American military followed a "surge-and-decline" model of military

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staffing; in times of crisis, young men would be summoned through the draft, quickly trained, and sent to war, and then would be sent home when the war was over. But after World War II, the constant specter of a fight with the Soviet Union demanded a more comprehensive battle force. Military planners decided to keep a large enough corps of active officers to provide the shell of a military whose enlisted ranks could then be filled by a draft in the case of war: The men, the thinking went, would then at least have capable leaders.

To respect the military doesn't simply require the sort of offhand pieties that liberal politicians frequently toss at it, but a deeply felt sense of belonging, a sense that the military embodies values which most of the country believes in.

In these early days, soldiers were kept nonpartisan by two institutions: the officer corps and the draft. In the emergent military academies and staff colleges that had been developed to continually train this new, permanent officer class, students were taught the George C. Marshall credo of military nonpartisanship, and, historians say, it took hold. (Marshall, famously, had argued that soldiers should not vote or support politicians or parties because it would compromise their ability to do their jobs; though that standard has lapsed in today's military, soldiers still retain a distaste for officers they see as overtly political.) Then, too, the enlisted army was, when it swelled in times of war, comprised of draftees, and consequently was diverse enough to reflect the broadest political leanings of its generation. Historians think that during World War II, when most soldiers had grown up during the Roosevelt '30s, the military was more Democratic than Republican. By the early '60s, the ranks reflected the conservatism of the 1950s. Vietnam made the military even more conservative. First, the all-volunteer military established by the 1973 abolition of the draft gave the troops a different demographic cast. They were disproportionately Southern, rural, poor, and morally traditional—the cultural base which would drive Nixon's Southern Majority and, 30 years later, Red America. Second, and perhaps more importantly, scholars say, men who had fought in Vietnam came out of that era with the sharp sense that they had been abandoned by American liberals, and to a lesser extent by the nation as a whole. A profound cultural divide appeared to develop between civilians and the military, two institutions with different sets of values. The distinction served, social scientists say, to help sharpen the soldiers' conservatism.

Through the 1970s, this cultural conservatism was kept from becoming overtly partisan in part because the military was an interest group: Soldiers wanted more pay and better, newer equipment, and so needed to negotiate both with Republicans and with the Democrats who controlled Congress. The Republicans, moreover, still had a strong fiscal conservative wing, which made them leery of outsized defense spending, and the Democrats still had a strong defense hawk wing, led by Washington Sen. Henry "Scoop" Jackson, which made them more amenable to big outlays.

But Ronald Reagan's presidency, accompanied by dovish realignments within the Democratic party, shattered this construct. Reagan's program of massive defense spending, along with his rhetorical massaging of the military's damaged, wound-licking ego, "gave the military back the respect it felt had been stripped from it by liberals after Vietnam," said David Segal of the University of Maryland, a sociologist who studies the American military. Soldiers became not only more Republican, but also more overtly political: For the first time, in 1988, a retired four-star general publicly endorsed George H. W. Bush for president, the sort of public demonstration of partisanship that would have been unimaginable two decades before.

Bill Clinton's presidency galvanized the base even more strongly. "There was a lot of anger towards the administration," said Wade Sanders, who served as deputy assistant undersecretary of the Navy from '93 to '98. Sanders says that even to military administration higher-ups like him, "it was clear that with the exception of [defense secretary] Bill Perry, nobody we dealt with understood the soldiers or were interested in making the services work better —they had fear of us, but no respect." The pattern of base closings initiated during the Clinton administration as part of the post-Cold War draw-down ended up relocating much of the nation's fighting forces to the South and the Southwest. This not only reinforced the military's southern cast, but meant that the local congressmen who would fight most strongly for the people on the military bases were Republicans.

It was during the mid-1990s, sparked by the rather overt and sometimes borderline disloyal antagonism members of the officer corps showed for the commander-in-chief, that clued-in academics and journalists began to worry about the "civil-military divide." Their thesis was that the nation's soldiers, since Vietnam, had been drifting in a profoundly right-wing direction, and now found themselves out of step with the more liberal values of the rest of the country. Thomas E. Ricks, a *Washington Post* reporter then with *The Wall Street Journal*, wrote a remarkable journalistic account of this divide in *The Atlantic Monthly* in '97, which found that soldiers tended to find civilians undisciplined, immoral, unpatriotic, and selfish. This divide, Ricks and others worried, was leading to a military that was increasingly unwieldy, and might grow impossible for civilians to really control.

Mind the gap

But when the first comprehensive academic study of the topic was published in 1999, it found that the divide was not as dramatic as had been assumed—a conclusion the study's lead author, Duke political scientist Peter Feaver, had not

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expected. He and his co-authors extensively polled soldiers on social issues and attitudes and found them "very much in line with what most of the country believed." But soldiers did differ profoundly from a group that the survey's authors classed as "cultural elites"—mostly liberal city-dwellers, people like the Clintons—and the soldiers believed their values, in some crucial ways, to be directly opposed to elite values. Soldiers, the study found, fitted firmly within the conservative end of the American mainstream.

Treatment of the military acts as an indicator for tens of millions of Americans who aren't enlisted of how seriously a party, administration, or politician takes the nation's security, and how competent he is to defend it.

One important moderating influence, sociologists think, has been the presence of large numbers of uniformed African Americans and, later, Hispanics and women. In 1973, when the brass tried to figure out how to staff a volunteer force, they chose to focus their recruiting efforts in large cities, where the most potential enlistees lived. By the mid-'80s, the military was the one place in America "where blacks regularly commanded whites," sociologist Charles Moskos wrote in 1984, and its reputation for giving minorities a fair shake drew increasing numbers of blacks, Hispanics, and women. Blacks now comprise almost a quarter of the military, women are nearly 15 percent, and Hispanics are more than 9 percent. The blacks, Hispanics, and women in the military are less liberal and Democratic than blacks, Hispanics, and women in the general population, but they are also less conservative and Republican than white men in the Armed Forces.

But the conservative base has remained the dominant political feature of the military, as the 2000 election showed. Agitated after eight years of the Clinton administration, enlisted men, officers, and veterans turned out strongly for Bush. George W. Bush found himself endorsed by more than 80 retired senior military officers—the sort of public, partisan support that would have been unthinkable 20 years earlier. There was a broad sense at all levels of the services, says Donald Vandergriff, an army major and a professor at Georgetown, that Bush "understood the military, valued it, that he would be their guy."

Flag poll

But there were signs of trouble from the beginning. From his first weeks in office, Rumsfeld initiated a series of semi-secret studies, as he prepared to revamp the entire military, from the way it deployed soldiers to the technologies it chose to purchase to the role of the reserves. By early May '01, Gordon Sullivan, the former Army chief of staff, sent an email to influential military personnel and thinkers in Washington sharply criticizing Rumsfeld's project; the note was published in *National Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and other publications, which took Sullivan's remarks as proxy for the opinions of a senior officer corps prohibited by law from speaking out themselves. "My sensing," Sullivan wrote, "is the Army will suffer greatly because of flawed assumptions and theories." Other voices quickly joined Sullivan's: "[Rumsfeld has] blown off the Hill, he's blown off the senior leaders in the military, and he's blown off the media," Thomas Donnelly, then a defense expert at William Kristol's neoconservative think-tank Project for the New American Century, told the *Post*.

But these rumblings were mostly confined to the senior level of the officer corps, those people who were directly involved in the creation of military policy. They were also particularly concentrated in the Army, the service branch that Rumsfeld had targeted for most dramatic reform. And even those gripes stopped, for the most part, after September 11, when Rumsfeld played what for most in the military was a hero's role during the attack on the Pentagon. He had been on the opposite side of the building when the hijacked plane crashed into the south side, and ran to the spot of the crash to help out those who had been hurt. The surge of patriotism and common purpose after September 11 was particularly strong within the military, and it quieted those officers who had been upset earlier.

Still, there was a persistent, if muted, sense among many in the senior levels of the officer corps that Rumsfeld's transformation of the military might be hasty and ill-considered. This opposition coalesced in the buildup to the Iraq war, and became particularly pointed after Rumsfeld's deputy, Paul Wolfowitz, pooh-poohed Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki's testimony before Congress that the occupation of Iraq would require "hundreds of thousands of troops;" Shinseki, not Wolfowitz, turned out to be right. There was great skepticism among many officers that Iraq was the right "next target" in the war on terrorism, and an emerging doubt that Rumsfeld and his lieutenants really knew what they were doing. But as the troops deployed, a sense of mission took over, and much of the grumbling stopped. Only in the aftermath of the conquest did there emerge a barely contained fury.

The military's gripes with the administration didn't grow widespread until after we'd conquered Iraq; the problems with planning, previously a matter of policy debate for top-level officers, translated into unpleasant realities for soldiers in the field. Many officers have become disenchanted with the continuing chaos in Iraq, and with the lengthening of in-country stays and the changing rotation schedules. "What I've seen throughout the officer corps is a real pendulum swing over the last three or four months, from being pro-Bush to anti-Bush," Vandergriff said. "The officers at the middle levels, who are traditionally the most Republican, are frustrated ... that there's no exit strategy," and worry that "this conflict could just drag on and on." Retired Gen. Anthony Zinni, who had been friendly enough with the Bush administration that he was sent last year as the president's special emissary to the Israelis and Palestinians, last month called the administration's policy a "brain fart." Says Richard Kohn, a

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professor of history at the University of North Carolina and a scholar of the military: "It is my belief that the Iraq war may be what forces the officer corps to return to the old George C. Marshall model of non-partisanship."

Corps voters

Discontented enlisted men and women have a separate set of provocations, which have been aired not only through the embedded media, but through weblogs updated and emails sent by soldiers in-country. Chief among these complaints is a widespread criticism that the military has fought this war with too few troops. The war in Iraq is already brutal enough day-to-day: Soldiers spend their days in hundred-plus degree heat, being shot at, peering anxiously into the distance, trying to pick out anyone likely to drive through a barricade with a car stuffed with explosives or whip a rifle out from under his robes and start shooting. They are facing an enemy who is not easily identifiable; when they are too aggressive, they are criticized by the press, and when they are not aggressive enough, they are reprimanded by their superiors, if they don't end up dead. In a chaotic situation like this, soldiers in-country live for the date on which they can return stateside. But many of them have seen that date pushed back, and then pushed back again, and then pushed back again. For a soldier, accustomed to regular, long-planned-for rotations, this makes the operation seem overwhelmingly open-ended—and is crushing to morale. "They feel overused, and under-appreciated, particularly in the enlisted ranks," Wilson said. Christopher Parker, a former Army captain and a political scientist at the University of California-Santa Barbara, put it to me more bluntly: "What we're seeing now is almost unprecedented, this widespread sense among people in the military that they're being jacked around."

Smaller slights have taken their toll, too. Those troops who have stayed in Iraq have been doing jobs that they have not been trained to do—most notably, combat units are doing peacekeeping. Just weeks after Condoleezza Rice promised that American troops would not be used to "escort Iraqi kids to kindergarten," newspaper photographs showed that they were doing exactly that. When Special Forces needed to be moved from Afghanistan to Iraq this summer, they were replaced by reservists who had been trained to speak Spanish and Russian. "There's a sense from everyone I talk to, even down at the unit level, that whoever planned this war simply had no idea what we were getting into," a retired Army captain told me.

Troops have been charged a dollar a minute to call home, newspapers have reported, and soldiers have to buy calling cards from Iraqi kiosks. Tens of thousands of troops have been sent to Iraq with flak jackets from the Vietnam era which, unlike the modern Kevlar, can't stop rounds from the Kalashnikov rifles typically fired by the Iraqi enemy. The Pentagon, looking to trim costs last spring, floated a plan to eliminate the pay benefits soldiers got for serving in so-called "hostile areas"; after a loud outcry from the ranks, they killed the plan. Some injured reservists were billed for food they were served while in the hospital. And veterans' groups are up in arms over the concurrent receipt issue, a military regulation which mandates that no retired soldier receiving his pension from the Department of Defense can also qualify for disability. As veterans' groups have pointed out, retired soldiers (who have more legitimate per capita disability claims than any other group of federal workers) are the only group of employees in the civil service who are barred from drawing simultaneous pensions and disability payments. The regulation has been in place for half a century, but veterans' groups had begun pushing aggressively for a regulation change in the last years of the Clinton administration, and there was a widespread expectation that Bush would reward the vets for having supported him so robustly in the election. "There are six hundred thousand disabled veterans, and they are furious," Joseph Galloway, *Knight Ridder*'s esteemed military reporter, told me.

Reservists may be the tipping point. The reserves have been summoned nine times in the last 12 years, to meet American obligations around the world, after having previously been summoned only six times since World War II. Reservists who have been sent to Iraq recently have found themselves vastly under-equipped. Things have gone so badly for the reservists that many senior officers, like Helmly, expect a staffing crisis when the current tours are up.

Values and weathervanes

The effect of all of this, says Andrew Bacevich, a retired Army colonel and professor of political science at Boston University, is that "the soldier vote and the pro-military vote are in play." In 2004, says Feaver, the military sociologist at Duke, "there is the potential for these forces which have always pushed towards the Republicans to be neutralized, or even pushing towards the Democrats."

If these frustrations spill over into politics in the next election, they could profoundly shift the structural underpinnings of the current nearly 50-50 American split. This country has 14 million active duty soldiers, and 1.2 million reserves. It also has 26.4 million veterans, nearly 13 percent of the nation's adult population. Politicians and activists involved in veterans affairs take it as a truism that a defining feature of veterans' politics is their perception of how the active military is being treated, and used. Subtle shifts in the way that massive population votes could obviously have far-reaching impacts in national politics.

A reassignment of less than two-hundredths of 1 percent in the military vote to the Democrats from the Republicans in Florida in 2000 would have moved that state to the Democratic column, and a similar shift of less than 5 percent in the veteran vote alone would have given Arkansas, Nevada, and New Hampshire's electoral votes to Gore, not Bush. And Pennsylvania and Ohio, expected to be crucial swing states in the next presidential election, each have more than a million veteran voters.

But the military and veterans' communities don't simply deliver their own votes. All over America, voters look to the military as a sort of weathervane—an institution whose values civilians trust and want politicians to support. This is par-

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The Compassion Gap

While I was in North Carolina, I spent two hours as a guest on the local political call-in show. I came on right after Rush Limbaugh's nationally syndicated program, and just before the local host interviewed Rush's brother, David Limbaugh, who has apparently written a book about liberals' war on Christianity. ("What the secularists don't want to admit," David Limbaugh told the host, "is that the monks kept learning alive throughout the Middle Ages.") The callers were all conservative, and no more than one personal relationship removed from the military (their husband, son, or co-worker had just left for Iraq, or they themselves had just come back. To a caller, they were upset with the way the war had been conducted. "The president keeps dragging these boys over there to be shot at; we don't know when it's going to end," one widow, from Morehead City, whose husband had been a veteran, told me. But she, and the other callers, had a near-sputtering, subarticulate hatred towards the Democrats – from Wesley Clark on left. "The Democrats are the ones who drew down the forces to begin with," Tony, a young ex-marine from Havelock, N.C., told me. "They have no respect for what we're trying to do."

Misusing the military is one thing; failing to respect it is a much more grave offense. If Democrats are to take advantage of the Republicans' vulnerability among national security voters in the 2004 Presidential election, they're going to have to learn to speak the language of the military, and communicate a passion for and empathy with the soldiers that few Democrats so far have managed. Another scene I saw at the mobilization ceremony in Jacksonville suggests the Democrats still have a long way to go.

The Wolverines had invited both North Carolina senators, Democrat John Edwards and Republican Elizabeth Dole, to address them as they were sent off to six months of training and 18 months of war, but both had prior engagements. They sent letters instead, and the mobilization ceremony's MC, a North Carolina National Guard lieutenant colonel named Tom Harris, read both aloud, Edwards's first. It was five short sentences long.

"I write to wish you well as you assume a vital role in our nation's continuing war against terrorism," Edwards wrote. North Carolina Guardsmen represented the "best our nation has to offer." Edwards offered his "deepest thanks to you and your loved ones for the courage you so readily display and the sacrifices you so willingly make."

Dole's, by contrast, was wonderful, touching, and personal. She talked about the "trials" the soldiers would go through, and how proud and worried the families would be. She discussed the experiences of her husband, fighting through the mountains of Italy in World War II She wrote empathetically about the difficulties that families would face, and employers, and how crucial their small sacrifice was to the larger, so important sacrifice the men in the guard would be making. She mentioned the places the men in this company came from by name, and reminded them how proud they had made those towns. When Colonel Harris finished reading Dole's letter, the two women on my left were crying, for the first time in the ceremony, and the older gentleman in front of me began to applaud, quietly, to himself.

Any Democrat in the crowd or among the Wolverines would have cringed at the contrast. These letters are an unglamorous staple of life in political offices in Washington; 27-year old junior staffers, not Edwards or Dole themselves, wrote them. But they reflected quite clearly what many, many retired officers told me last month: The Republican majority in the military community is due less to any specific policies than to a sense that they "get" what the military is all about, while the Democrats don't. Elizabeth Dole's letter, compassionate and personal, "got" the military. John Edwards's perfunctory, bland sending off, which could have been a fare-ye-well to recently assigned airport security guards, did not. — B.W.-W.

ticularly true of working-class white swing voters, many of whom have a soldier in their family or know someone who does. The attachment to the military is even more potent among certain occupations — police, firefighters, engineers — whose ranks are heavily represented in the reserves. The policemen, firemen, and engineers who stay at home look across the room each day at the empty desks of their colleagues fighting in the Iraqi theater. They check email each day for personal dispatches from the front lines. They drop off food for the left-behind families.

Then there are those who are not personally connected to the military, but for whom honor of the military and the military's opinion acts as a moral barometer, revealing which politicians have the right values and which don't. The military is a deeply trusted and honored institution in American life — far more important than the media, politicians, or teachers. To respect the military doesn't simply require the sort of offhand pieties that liberal politicians frequently toss at it, but a deeply felt sense of belonging, a sense that the military embodies values which most of the country believes in. Treatment of the military consequently acts as an indicator for tens of millions of Americans who aren't enlisted of how seriously a party, administration, or politician takes the nation's security, and how competent he is to defend it. Political scientists call these people national security voters. "[They] are not so minutely interested in issues like health care for the military or how many reserves are in Iraq at one time," said Feaver. "These people rely heavily on general impressions of whether a particular politician or administration is good for the military or bad for the military. What should really worry the Republicans is the potential for all of these problems you hear about to add up to an impression for the national security voter that the Republicans may not be so good for the military."

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The current rough balance in national politics between Democrats and Republicans is due in large part to a delicate calibration between a Democratic advantage on domestic issues and a Republican edge on national security. "Those two things determine the country's political structure; when they cancel each other out, then other issues, like health care, education, or social issues become important, but that pretty much only happens when the economy and national security are not decisive," says John Aldrich, a political scientist at Duke University. The Republicans have maintained an advantage of between 15 and 20 points on national security for the last 20 years, since Ronald Reagan's massive defense spending bills, an advantage which right now equals the Democratic advantage on the economy. The calibrations are so precise that minute shifts matter. The great political triumph of Bill Clinton's presidency was to move the Democratic advantage on the economy by between two and three points; this slight shift, Aldrich and other political scientists say, boosted him to sweeping reelection victory in 1996, and enabled his party to improve their congressional advance in 1998, an historic achievement for the party of a second-term president. What has some Republicans scared is the specter of a similar shift, numerically small but profound, that dents the GOP's advantage on national security and threatens their slim electoral majority. This is the kind of vulnerability that could change the structure of American politics.

Imperial anachronism

But the current discontent among troops will reverberate far beyond the next election. "Failed wars are momentous occasions in any nation's history," observes William Lind, Director of the Center for Cultural Conservatism at the Free Congress Foundation. And while the ultimate success or failure of the current war has yet to be determined, Lind notes that "the consequences of what is happening in Iraq are likely to be complex and profound." The effects of military failure in Vietnam lasted for decades, as young officers who served in the rice patties rose in the ranks, eventually translating their searing experiences into new politics (a heightened distrust of liberals) and new policy (the Powell Doctrine of overwhelming force). Similarly, those young officers currently coping with the lethal chaos of the Sunni triangle will forever remember the false assumptions and outright deceptions that put them in that position. And while it is impossible to know exactly what their long-term reactions will be, two possibilities come to mind. First, having strongly supported the GOP, only to watch some of its leaders dismiss their concerns, many members of the uniformed military—especially in the Army—may conclude that it is a mistake to bestow their loyalties on to any one party. Second, having allowed Bush administration officials to quash their advice and analysis, military leaders may decide that next time around, they will be less deferential to policymakers. In other words, the military may become both less partisan and less respectful of civilian authority—or at least more willing to challenge that authority when it seems warranted.

Similar reverberations are likely to alter the Republican Party's conduct of foreign policy. The GOP has never been a foreign-policy monolith. Its thinkers span a broad spectrum, from patriotic isolationists like Pat Buchanan, to go-it-alone interventionists like Rumsfeld and Cheney, to more moderate figures like Sen. Chuck Hagel (R-Neb.), who value of institutions like the United Nations. If there was a majority foreign-policy position among conservative voters and activists before 9/11, it tended to be closest to the Buchananite wing. Indeed, for the first few months of George W. Bush's presidency, his foreign policy was cautious, minimalist, and incited little opposition. But September 11 empowered the administration's unilateral interventionist wing, and pushed isolationists and multilateralists to the sidelines. The White House began to adopt policies that matched the strategic disposition that such officials as Rumsfeld, Cheney, Paul Wolfowitz had had all along: a belief in the necessity of aggressive preventative action abroad, and a conviction that international institutions held values which were at best inconsistent with, and at worst antithetical to, American principles and interest. Ever since September 11, Bush has taken most of his advice from "what is really a very, very narrow range of Republican opinion," says James M. Lindsay, vice president of the Council on Foreign Relations and a scholar of presidential foreign policy. Republicans (and Democrats) in Congress went along with the shift—in part, no doubt, from a sense that perhaps international politics had changed irrevocably and that the way Americans pursued their goals needed to change, too, but also because of the political pressures of the moment: It seemed foolhardy and unpatriotic to criticize a war president with 90 percent approval ratings. This state of affairs continued until the last few months, when the Bush administration's failure to find weapons of mass destruction, a mounting death toll, and sticker shock over the bill in Iraq ripped open the old divisions.

The unilateral interventionists still hold the reins of power within the GOP, largely because their champions dominate the West Wing and the Department of Defense. But their purchase on rank and file, Republicans especially among the military and national security voters, is slipping. That slippage will continue unless the Bush administration can secure enough international funds and troops so that the U.S. military presence can be scaled back without compromising the stability of Iraq. If these efforts fail, and if that failure contributes to Bush losing in '04, the unilateral interventionist wing will be disgraced. Power within the GOP will flow to the isolationists and multilateralists, respectively hampering or helping any Democrat who might win the presidency.

Six months ago, commentators of all ideological and strategic points of view were debating the merits, and potential form, of an American empire. But now, restive citizens are unhappy about the financial burdens of occupation, and soldiers are complaining to family and friends that they're sitting ducks and want out. The world-straddling, saber-rattling visions of the unilateral interventionists, who a few short months ago had Damascus, Tehran, and Pyongyang in their sights, now seem a little less like an imminent reality, and a little more like a bad dream. ●

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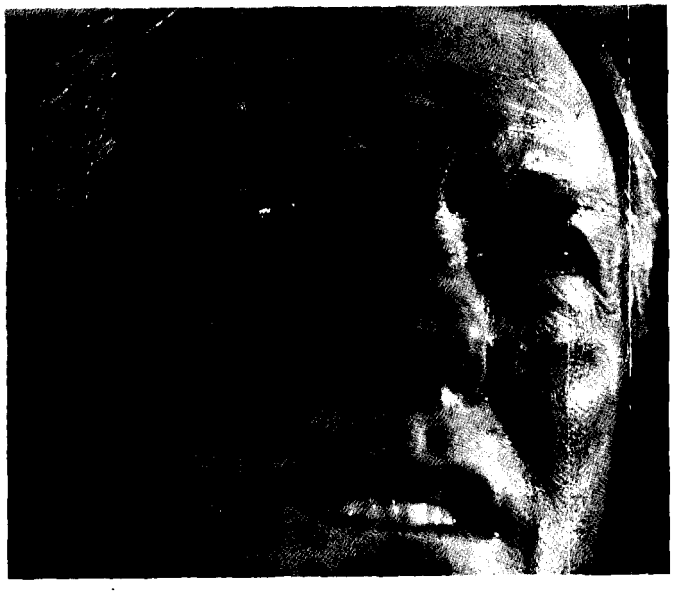
The Running Men

How candidates decide to run for president reveals how prepared they are to win.

By Walter Shapiro



Campaign chronicles, the spiritual descendants of Teddy White's trail-blazing *The Making of the President*, have sadly become a dying genre. No matter how beautifully crafted and meticulously researched, these now-it-can-be-told political narratives, which traditionally come out after the campaign is long over, suffer from a built-in flaw—readers know the inevitable conclusion before they get to the first page. Even as a card-carrying political junkie, I would find it hard to curl up right now with a backward-looking recap of, say, the 2000 race filled with passages that begin, "Bill Bradley was nervous . . ." That's why I thought that it would be glorious fun to publish my impressions of the early phase of the 2004 Democratic presidential race at the precise moment when Americans are becoming transfixed with the wide-open, anything-can-happen battle for the nomination.

Walter Shapiro is a contributing editor of *The Washington Monthly* and a columnist for *USA Today*. This article is adapted from his forthcoming book, *One-Car Caravan*. Copyright 2003. Reprinted by arrangement with Public Affairs, a member of the Perseus Books Group. All rights reserved.

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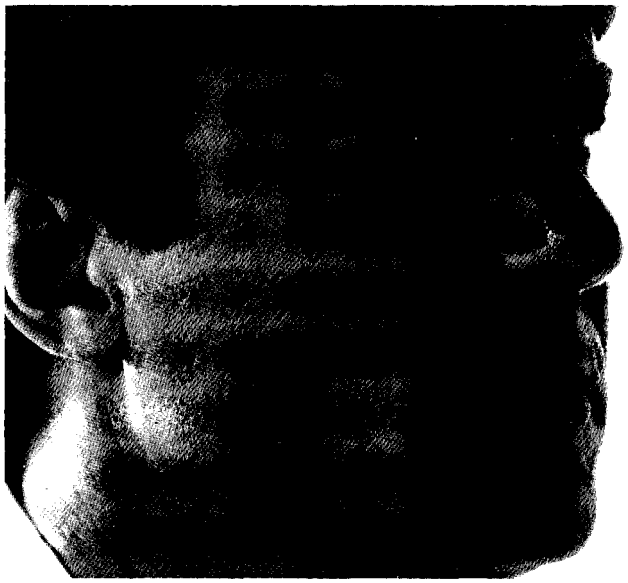
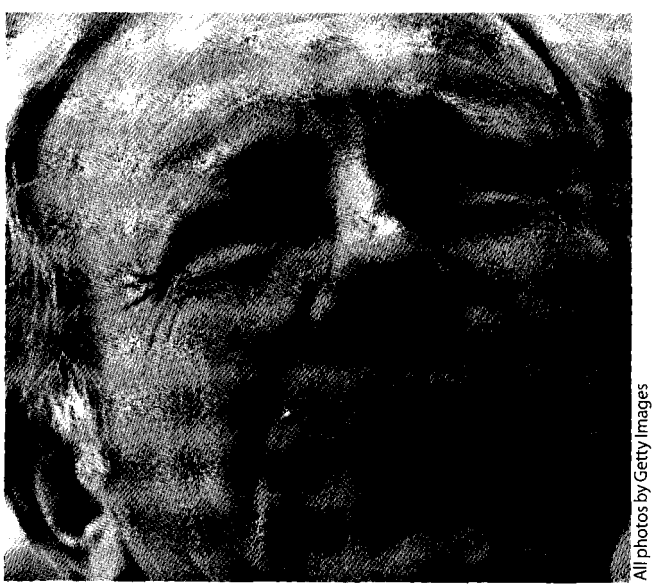
During my quarter century of covering presidential campaigns, I have found that the most telling glimpses of the candidates have come when they were just beginning to step into the cauldron of ambition. This is the time when their lines were still unscripted and their public veneers hung loosely like a suit that they had not yet grown into. Yet most political coverage during this early period is buried in the back pages of the newspapers. With a war in Iraq and other breaking news stories, who can blame editors for decreeing that full-tilt coverage of the presidential campaign could wait until the fall of this year? But what this means, in practice, is that most Americans tune into the campaign at the point when the Democratic contenders have thrown off the last vestiges of spontaneity, and virtually every syllable they utter is an echo of an earlier speech, question-and-answer session, or interview.

It is a Washington cliché that every senator peers into his shaving mirror and sees the next president. But few ever start that journey. Those that do must weigh the competing obligations to country and family, the challenges of fundraising, the evaporation of privacy, the odds of being elected, and ultimately the deep, dark-night-of-the-soul quandary, the question that should leave any self-aware politician in fear and trembling about the implications of his own ambitions: whether he is ready to assume the responsibilities of actually serving as president. For those who ultimately grab for the brass ring, the way they make the decision to run can be revealing.

For instance, retired Gen. Wesley Clark's year-long private agonies over whether to become a candidate are telling, reflecting either a preternatural self-confidence about his presidential prospects or a Bambi-like innocence about the political process. While his rivals were taking questions from real voters in Iowa and New Hampshire, Clark was charming elite audiences at forums like the Aspen Institute. On the other hand, Florida's star-crossed senator, Bob Graham, who decided in late 2002 to enter the race, chose—or rather stumbled into—a weird way of announcing his candidacy. Appearing on a call-in show on a Haitian-American radio station in Miami, a listener asked the senator whether he was considering the presidency, and Graham couldn't bring himself to obfuscate. By the end of the day, the rest of the media was onto the story. Graham's unwillingness to play the game and save his big news for, say, "Meet the Press" revealed an admirable decency and forthrightness. But his inability to master the news cycle also served as an early warning sign of his inability to master the rigors of a presidential campaign. In early October, with his fund-raising lagging and his poll ratings negligible, Graham became the first 2004 drop out.

But beyond the obvious extremes of the dilatory Clark and the impetuous Graham, I am convinced that something essential about the character and temperament of each of the 2004 candidates was revealed by the way that he made the decision to begin the long trek toward the White House.





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The Rookie

In early December 2002, when a rumor buzzed around Washington that John Edwards was having second thoughts about running, I scheduled a lunch with the vacillating candidate's most trusted adviser, the one person sure to be privy to his inner deliberations: his wife, Elizabeth Edwards. Elizabeth—a bankruptcy attorney until their 16-year-old son, Wade, was killed in a freak automobile accident in 1996—normally projects an air of bemused confidence. But that afternoon, Elizabeth, dressed in jeans and a sweater, fluttered nervously in the kitchen of their sprawling rented house in the Spring Valley neighborhood of Washington over the simple act of toasting the white bread for our lunch of egg-salad sandwiches. With her husband arriving home that afternoon from a four-day, burnish-the foreign-policy-credentials visit to NATO headquarters in Brussels, the uncertainty and waiting were taking their toll on the home front.

We sat down at a table in the large, comfortable library that serves as the casual center of family life. Nearby was the computer that Elizabeth uses to thread her way through strand after strand of the latest campaign stories, typing her husband's name and those of his putative rivals into the Google News search engine. Elizabeth immediately confirmed the rumors. Yes, they had intense discussions about the pros and cons of the race when their eldest daughter, Cate, was home from Princeton over Thanksgiving, and Edwards has been talking with his fellow senators. At my request, Elizabeth outlined the case for not running this time around: "That John's doing it too soon. Should he wait and do it, if he's going to do it, in 2008?" She pauses and then adds, "The first question that he has to ask doesn't have to do with the field, it has to do with himself. Am I up to this? Not only am I up to the job of the campaign, but am I up to the job of presidency?"

John Edwards has not had a moment's pause in his headlong rush to the top; he was in the Senate for little more than a year when, in a tribute to both his southern base and his courtroom–honed skills as an advocate, he popped up on Gore's short list of potential 2000 running mates. Politics as a second career has come easily to Edwards, perhaps too easily. But no would-be president is ever prepared for what awaits him the moment he steps into the Oval Office. The real question, although Elizabeth didn't use these precise words, was whether Edwards was ready to play at the top of his potential game. His years as a trial lawyer had given him a quick-study ability to master complex material, skills that might translate well to the White House. But is that enough? Had he come far enough along his personal learning curve to grapple with a fast-changing and threatening world?

For Elizabeth, a woman who listens to C-SPAN radio in her car, the other side of the equation was the risk of four more years of a Bush presidency. Her voice brimming with partisan zeal, she ran through the standard litany of issues from the red-ink tax cuts to the president's ill-advised judicial appointments. "We have to win," she said. "The nation can't afford for us to lose." And she adds, "I just think that he's more likable, warmer, and more engaging than any of the other Democrats ... I also think he beats Bush on that score."

Her comments reflected a mixture of honesty, wifely pride, and a can-do optimism that is a hallmark of both her and her husband. Any obstacle (excluding the loss of Wade) can be overcome with hard work, a broad smile, and innate intelligence. But now she finds herself on the outside looking in, as this practiced attorney argues the case for and against running for president in his own mind. She thinks he's going to do it, she hopes he's going to do it, but she isn't confident that's what he'll decide. Finally, gesturing toward the front door, she said, "Maybe he'll come back from this trip and know the answer." I swiveled my head in the expectation of witnessing this dramatic homecoming scene. Of course, it didn't happen.

The Edwards loyalists were, for the most part, younger and hungrier than the campaigners for his likely opponents. Although his advisers claimed that methodically thinking through the rigors and rationale of a presidential campaign is a useful and even high-minded exercise, they had assumed that this was a slam-dunk leading to only one possible conclusion. After all, they were certain enough to dedicate the next 18 months of their lives to nominating John Edwards for president. Why then was the candidate of their dreams having these doubts?

A few days after Edwards returned from Europe, two of his advisers trekked to the senator's home to argue for the virtues of unveiling his candidacy the week before Christmas, a traditionally slow news period. A little skittish, the staffers organized their mission under the guise of showing the candidate the new campaign logo. When they casually inquired whether the senator had any firm plans for the week of Dec. 16, Edwards snapped, "I'm not going to rush this decision just to get a little more press."

It is impossible for an outsider to gauge what role the memory of his son Wade (whose Outward Bound pin Edwards wears in the lapel of his suit jacket) played in his inner struggle over seeking the presidency. Neither John nor Elizabeth ever mentioned Wade in any of the meetings at the house, but his presence, even six years after his death, hovered softly around both of them. As one Edwards adviser explained, "Someone like John Edwards is painfully aware that life moves quickly and things are precarious. We never talked about it, but it has to be part of his thinking." Others in the inner circle suggested that Wade's death made Edwards impervious to the fears that govern the lives of other politicians, fears like losing an election. As veteran pollster Harrison Hickman, who had advised Edwards since the 1998 Senate campaign, put it, "After you have to get up on a table in a medical-examiner's office and hug your son good-bye, there's nothing they can ever do to you."

Right after Christmas, Edwards escaped both the flurry of phone calls probing his intentions and the chaos of

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a household revolving around two small children, by retreating (as he often did before major trials) to the family's North Carolina beach house on Figure Eight Island near Wilmington. There, over three days, he finally made his decision. There was never a Eureka moment, just the gradual arc of inevitability. Edwards deserves credit for recognizing the need for solitude and for refusing to be stampeded into seeking the presidency by the restlessness of his staff. In a follow-up conversation, Elizabeth recalled, "It was necessary for him to say, 'You have to do it on its own merits.' And not because people expected you to or even that they turned down another job to take this prospective job with you."

The Loyalist

Joe Lieberman was that rare senator born without a presidential gland. No stranger to ego, though he masks it well, Lieberman's lack of palpable interest in the big prize didn't stem from any concern over being too Jewish or too hawkish. Rather, before 2000, he always regarded himself as a man of the Senate. Even with his family, he never allowed himself to muse aloud, "Well, maybe, someday, if everything goes right..." Even when a conservative newspaper columnist would occasionally suggest that the Democrats should abandon their foolhardy leftist ways and look to someone like Lieberman, the Connecticut senator would wave it off with a bemused air. As Rebecca Lieberman, his 33-year-old daughter from his first marriage, recalled, "He never talked about running for president. He never talked about it with us."

Of course, everything changed as soon as Lieberman ended up a hanging chad short of having the heartbeat-away job of vice president. Small wonder. Every vice presidential nominee in the past 30 years, with the conspicuous exception of Geraldine Ferraro, has at one time run for president. Now that he was kosher-certified presidential timber, Lieberman was poised to be a candidate, except for his old-fashioned loyalty to Al Gore, the man who single-handedly raised the Connecticut senator's sights beyond someday being chairman of the Armed Services Committee. Throughout 2002, Lieberman was animated by the intuition—more a hunch than any solid nugget of information—that Gore wouldn't do it. But by late fall, as Gore roared back into the headlines with his book tour and a foreign-policy speech assailing Bush's Iraq policy, Lieberman began to develop a frisson of doubt. After all these careful if-I-run preparations, was his career again destined to be defined by a near miss? Lieberman, though, was absolutely certain about one thing: Gore had said he would announce his decision in early January. The senator expected to learn more when the two of them got together at Gore's Washington-area home on Monday morning, Dec. 16, for a long-scheduled chat.

But Lieberman didn't have to wait. Instead, the news broke mid-afternoon Sunday the 15th. Lieberman had just returned from Connecticut to his Georgetown home in one of Washington's rare gated communities. His wife, Hadassah, was in New York City, and the senator was sharing the house with their 14-year old daughter, Hana. Suddenly he got a message from a Senate staffer on his BlackBerry wireless console: There's a rumor that Al isn't running. Lieberman and his daughter immediately switched on CNN to learn that Gore would indeed announce on "60 Minutes" that he had chosen not to be a candidate. A surge of adrenaline shot through Lieberman as he thought, "This is what I hoped for, this is what I dreamed about and, uh-oh, this is just the beginning of a long and grueling ordeal that can end who knows where." Hana, a deeply religious teenager, let loose with what even Orthodox rabbis would agree was the only appropriate response: "Holy shit!"

About an hour later, Lieberman received a text message on his BlackBerry from Gore formally confirming everything and asking to postpone their meeting so that the former vice president could work through his must-call list. When Matt Lieberman, a teacher in New Haven, called, he found his father's mood to be well-modulated enthusiasm (more "How about that?" than "Yippee!") mixed with an undertone of seriousness about the gravity of the undertaking. As Lieberman later told me, "That day I felt a combination of excitement and seriousness because this was it. I was now faced with this awesome responsibility. So I wasn't jumping up and down." At the time, the mostly vacationing Lieberman loyalists were a far-flung lot, since they had been operating under the assumption that the first hints of a Gore decision would not come until after Christmas. So the residents of Lieberworld—the loyalists and staffers plus the senator and his family—got together on a conference call that evening and merely decided that Lieberman would hold a Monday press conference to announce that he "probably is a candidate." But that was a mere fig leaf of plausible denial. For during the call, Rebecca Lieberman concluded, "It's definite all right. We're doing this." The yarmulke was in the ring.

The Idealist

If you believe the venomous critics of John Forbes Kerry, he's been running for president since his prep school days when he first realized the implications of the initials "JFK." Yet for all the sneering put-downs of his overweening ambition, after nearly two decades on Capitol Hill, he is only now embarking on his first race for the White House. On a Sunday in mid-August 2002, I accompanied Kerry on a trip to New Hampshire. The senator at times radiated eagerness about the coming Democratic contest, saying, "I feel that people are ready to get things going with the presidential race. It can't happen soon enough."

On that afternoon, Kerry was still months away from commissioning the stump speech and the scripted sound bites that would later define his campaign for the White House. Instead, like all the other Democratic hopefuls at this premature stage, his speeches were a personal "Great-

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est Hits" album—applause lines from his Senate campaigns, tropes that he has been using for years, flights of rhetoric salvaged from his mental attic—fascinating in their own right as a Baedeker to his political persona. There was a time-warp quality to Kerry's words as the calendar kept drifting back to the 1960s, the decade that carried him from Yale to the Mekong Delta as a navy officer (where he received a Silver Star, a Bronze Star, and three Purple Hearts during two tours of combat) and eventually transformed him into a disillusioned crusader against the Vietnam War.

Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images

Hearing Kerry on the early days of the campaign trail, I got the sense that he is still trying to work through the '60s, still trying to capture something elusive from his youth.

Late that afternoon at a party fundraiser in Londonderry, standing this time on a rock in a sprawling backyard, Kerry spoke with fervor about another 1968 campaign—the anti-war insurgency of Gene McCarthy. Fatigued after three lengthy speeches and brooding over his mother's health, Kerry offered raw emotion rather than polished diction as he conjured up the turbulent decade that molded him: "One thing that was authentic, honest, that came from the gut and the passion of people was the notion that as individuals we could make a difference in the life around us. And when people saw that the war was wrong, Gene McCarthy and a bunch of kids came up here, the peanut-butter and-jelly brigade, and they went out there, living off those sandwiches and knocking on the doors. And he sent the president of the United States a message that he couldn't continue to be president of the United States and wage that war." I get the sense that Kerry is still trying to work through the '60s, still trying to capture something elusive from his youth, and yet the answer remains just beyond his mental grasp, like an emotion-laden dream that vanishes with the first rays of daylight.

Sitting in his Senate office on an early spring day in 2003, Kerry gestured toward a burnished leather sofa and said, "I didn't think about it for 10 seconds in '92 when Paul Tsongas sat on that red couch and asked if I was thinking about running for president. He told me that he was, and I said no I wasn't." But in 2000, Kerry, like Gephardt, made preliminary noises about challenging Gore. Yet for a range of factors (impeachment, Gore's prowess, Bill Bradley's candidacy and, he insists, concerns about divisiveness in the party), Kerry never entered the fray. But this time there was no hesitancy, at least on his part. As Kerry explained, "I felt so frustrated and angry about the [2002] election, angry about what happened to Max Cleland, angry about the voicelessness of my party and determined to make a difference. That resolved it for me, fairly quickly and easily." Cleland, a Vietnam veteran confined to a wheelchair because of his war wounds, was defeated in his Senate reelection bid in Georgia by a vicious GOP campaign that assailed his patriotism.

Kerry's second wife Teresa Heinz, widow of Pennsylvania Republican Sen. John Heinz and heiress to a half-billion-dollar-plus condiment fortune, is a longtime student of senators on both sides of the political and marital aisle, and she understands the presidential bug. A young-looking 64 (call me naive, but I thought her secret was great genes and not, as she later revealed to *Elle* magazine, Botox injections), she appreciates the time-is-fleeting pressures on her husband as he nears that day of reckoning with a 60-candle-power birthday cake. "This is his fourth term," she said, "and he, like a lot of us, maybe it's age-related, maybe it's the state of the world, feels a certain urgency to talk about certain things." As she explained, "I think he viewed this as an opportunity to finally get things off his chest and go for broke. Just go for broke."

"We talked about it a lot over the last year or so, off and on," she said in February 2003, in the Washington office of the Heinz Foundation. "Mostly, it was how do we cope with this? How do we live our lives? Is it really the right thing for us at this time?" Dressed in a black jacket and skirt highlighted by a white blouse and a large bejeweled cross encrusted with diamonds, she explained her initial reluctance: "I cherish privacy. I like to go to the supermarket. I like to talk to the shopkeeper. That's a big sacrifice for me, because I love doing those things." Here was how she framed what to her was the Big Question: "Do I, caring as much as I do about so many issues, have the right for selfish reasons, personal reasons, not to be part of his trip? And the more I thought about it—hiking by myself

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and just thinking, just out there with nature and God—the more I thought that I have to help him because of what he had to say, the questions that he had to raise."

The Maverick

Nothing in political reporting compares to the enforced intimacy of sitting with a candidate in the backseat on a long car ride, as I did with Howard Dean one Saturday in late summer 2002. There are no distractions, just two guys talking, as the one with the tape recorder tries to take the measure of the other who wants to be president while the topics range from Jean-Paul Sartre (Dean has an encyclopedic memory of his political philosophy courses at Yale) to the lineup of the 1961 Yankees. Up until now, Dean, the governor of a rustic bed-and-breakfast state, has been something of a stealth candidate—and this was only his third lengthy interview with a national reporter. In the campaign's early days, you could still pose an obvious question and receive a candid rather than canned response. So, I ask, how did you decide to run for president? "It's a hard question to answer," Dean began. "The answer should be that I deeply care about it, and I thought it all out. But the way it happens is that I'm very intuitive, so I was driven toward running before I knew why I was doing it. I know that doesn't make any sense. It sounds like I'm just a very ambitious person who wants to be president."

I resisted the temptation to mention that naked ambition has spawned countless other candidacies. But Dean does it for me: "There's a big difference between me and some of the other Democrats. There are two Democrats running because they want to be president, that's all they can tell you." (An obvious, if slightly petulant, reference to probable rivals John Kerry and John Edwards.) "I want to be president because I want health insurance, I want to balance the budget, I want a decent foreign policy. I want to lead people, not follow. I don't want to just do what it takes to be elected." (Whoops, here comes the stump speech.)

Surprisingly, Dean opted for something suspiciously close to honesty: "I decided in August [2001],"—the month that his father, a retired stockbroker also named Howard, died at age 80—"that I wasn't going to run again [for governor]. It then quickly came to me that I had a choice of joining boards and swearing at *The New York Times* every morning and saying how outrageous it was. Basically, I was in a position where I thought I could run for president, so I decided that I was going to." That answer is about as unvarnished as an experienced politician ever gets. For all his sincere, if still vague, sentiments about health care, the economy, and foreign policy, Dean is not running as an embodiment of a political movement. There were no "Draft Dean" Web sites or trial balloons floated by his fellow governors. Rather, faced with a life change in his early 50s, Dean recoiled at the vision of the road ahead—a few corporate boards, a blue-ribbon commission or two, the semi-retired, didn't-you-used-to-be-somebody, bland life of a respected former governor. Having stared into the abyss of irrelevance, Dean preferred to roll the dice at a craps table soon to be filled with other candidates who would arrive with huge piles of chips and chits earned in Washington.

The Lifer

The day after the dispiriting 2002 elections, Dick Gephardt, who resembled Sisyphus in his efforts to win back the House, stepped down as minority leader. Two days later, on the Friday of election week, Gephardt was perched on a couch in his palatial, soon-to-be-relinquished leadership office in the Capitol. Over his head was a dramatic rendering of the romance of the Industrial Age—an oversize 1873 painting of the Eads Bridge, the first railroad crossing of the Mississippi River, which was slated to be returned to the St. Louis Art Museum. Gephardt had been conducting continuous interviews since the election. Although his words were practiced, the anguish over falling on his sword was still audible in his voice.

The renunciation of his leadership post was not exactly a surprise, since many had assumed that it would be the logical response to the expected Democratic defeat. But Gephardt insisted that he made the decision with his wife, Jane: "We came back here after the election and we sat most of the day at home. And we decided that I didn't want to do this any more. I wanted out." Gephardt, at this point, kept up the pretense of being elusive: "I want to do something different. What it is, I don't know at this point; I haven't figured it all out."

Fast-forward to my next conversation with Gephardt—a fast figure-it-outer who was now an active presidential candidate—in late January 2003, the day of the State of the Union address. This time, because of a bomb scare, we took refuge in Gephardt's former hideaway office off the House floor, to which his staff still held the key. The walls, once filled with cartoons and other memorabilia from his 1988 presidential race, had been stripped bare. When I asked about the decision to run, Gephardt made a surprising admission: "It's always a hard decision. I guess the decision to step down as leader was harder." Those words made me think of Bob Dole wandering forlornly across America in mid-1996, ruing the day that he let his handlers convince him that resigning the Senate seat he loved was the only way to demonstrate his determination to oust Clinton from the White House. But Dole was Senate majority leader, while Gephardt, if he had stayed on, would have been stuck with heading the toothless House Democratic opposition at a time when the Republicans had no interest in bipartisanship. Gephardt, in his early 60s, had come to a point in life when the House was not a home. His reasoning was understandable—having hungered after the White House for nearly two decades, he felt entitled to one final turn of the wheel. It was place your bets, up or out, and hopefully no lasting regrets if you lose. ◆

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Franklin, my dear ...

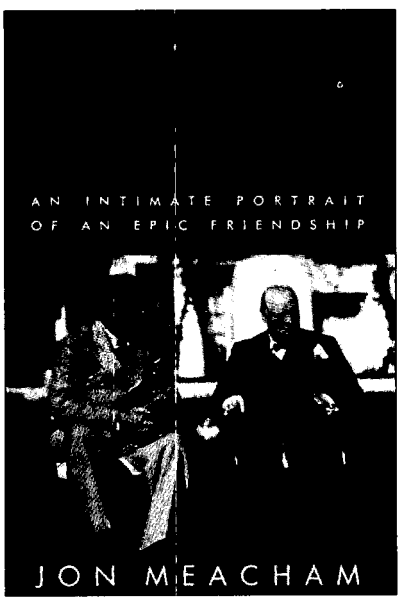
The limits of political friendship.

By Bruce Clark

Both were born in the most privileged circles of their respective countries, at a time when the British and American elites were more closely intertwined, and far more exclusively white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant than they are today. As children they read the same nonsense verses, and tales of heroism at sea; both were fascinated with military strategy, and by naval warfare in particular.

But as Jon Meacham points out in his highly intelligent and immensely readable account of one of the 113 days which Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt spent together during World War II, the two men's psycho-histories—and therefore the qualities they brought to the friendship—could hardly have been more different.

Even by the norms of the British upper class, Churchill's parents were neglectful. His politician father, Lord Randolph Churchill, treated Winston with cruelty and sarcasm when he noticed his son at all. His American mother Jennie was a glamorous society lady who shone—in Winston's own poignant words—"like the evening star," brightly but from a great distance. Like so many other young British patricians, he was saved from becoming a complete emotional cripple by a tender-hearted nanny.



Franklin & Winston: an Intimate Portrait of a Epic Friendship
By Jon Meacham
Random House, $29.95

The net result could have been predicted by any dabbler in psychoanalysis: The wartime prime minister carried around with him a keenly-felt need to win the approval of those he admired, and he was undeterred when the objects of his affection seemed cold or ungrateful. Churchill had several other childish qualities which on balance worked to his advantage. More than most products of the British private school system, he was in touch with his feelings: He was sentimental and easily moved to tears, but he also had a child's ability to forgive and to seek forgiveness.

Roosevelt, by contrast, was showered with affection as a boy, as the adored only child of a 53-year-old father and a proud and ambitious 27-year-old mother. Secure, optimistic, and conscious of being more intelligent than average, he learned from an early age how to influence and, where necessary, to manipulate people. The president's manipulative and at times devious quality was brought to the fore when he was stricken with polio and confined to a wheelchair; meetings and ceremonies had to be stage-managed even more carefully than before to compensate for his disability.

The contrasting, but in some ways complementary, personalities of Churchill and Roosevelt set the stage for a fascinating study of the importance—and limits—of one-to-one diplomacy at great moments in world affairs. Through hundreds of hours of elaborate ceremony, intimate conversation, shared recreation, and scores of affectionate hand-written notes, the two wartime leaders self-consciously cultivated their relationship. As Churchill himself said, with disarming frankness, "no lover ever studied the whims of his mistress as I did those of President Roosevelt."

The mere fact that both men had a keener-than-average sense of the

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pageant of history, of their own place in it, was a powerful bond.

But the hard truth remains that all relationships, and in particular all political relationships, unfold in a context: They are determined not merely by the personalities involved, but by the external circumstances which make them more or less dependent on one another. From the very outbreak of the Second World War, Britain's dependence on American help, whether direct or indirect, was acute, as Churchill could see more clearly than most of his compatriots.

The United States, for its part, had a strong stake in Britain's ability to keep Hitler at bay, but this was not self-evidently a matter of life or death for the American republic. Well before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor drew America into the war, Roosevelt was keen to help Churchill in any way that was politically feasible; but he was answerable to American public opinion, of which a large segment was isolationist, and to a political class which was by no means convinced of the complete identity of interest between the English-speaking powers. Hence the toughness of the terms on which America provided the British navy with destroyers; Roosevelt could not have helped Britain in purely a disinterested way, even if that was his dearest wish. But perhaps the most fundamental disparity between Britain and the United States is that the former had no alternative to the closest possible relationship with America, while for the United States, friendship with its former colonial master was only one option among many.

As the war raged on, and America's vast manufacturing base progressively dwarfed that of Britain, the terms of the partnership changed in Roosevelt's favor. Underneath all the bonhomie and protestations of friendship between the English-speaking peoples, Churchill was ever more conscious that the postwar world would be dominated by the two superpowers, America and Russia, with Britain struggling to maintain its place in the elite club. This inexorable reality, as well as the personalities involved, help to explain the bizarre drama which played out in November 1943 in Tehran, when the English-speaking leaders met for the first time with their ally, Joseph Stalin. Only weeks earlier, the prime minister had given a stirring address to Harvard University on the ties of "blood and history" that united the English-speaking democracies; and Churchill and his wife Clementine had spent their wedding anniversary being feted and toasted by the president at Hyde Park, his beloved residence on the Hudson River.

Sorry, Winnie. I promised Joe the next dance.

But in Tehran, Roosevelt went out of his way to snub Churchill; as part of a strategy to gain Stalin's confidence, he refused to meet the prime minister alone, and insisted on having a private meeting with the Soviet leader, before they conferred as a threesome. Later, when Stalin needled and provoked Churchill, Roosevelt often seemed to take the Soviet tyrant's side. In an especially odd scene, Stalin proposed the execution of 50,000 German officers—a joke apparently, but not a hilariously funny one from a leader who had already killed millions of his own subjects. Churchill stormed out of the room, his anger exacerbated by a burbling statement in support of Stalin from Roosevelt's son, Elliott. Years afterwards, Churchill observed that he was never fully convinced that Stalin's proposal was merely teasing.

In any overall assessment of the Churchill-Roosevelt friendship, these unhappy moments matter much less than the fact that in 1944, the two leaders jointly planned and oversaw the invasion of France, thus disproving Stalin's charge that they were faint- hearted in their pursuit of war with Germany.

D-Day was an operation in which tens of thousands of soldiers from both English-speaking democracies were bound to die—and one whose success was by no means guaranteed. Above all, it was a risk that Churchill and Roosevelt shouldered together. It is true, on one hand, that however great their mutual devotion, politicians from different countries cannot change the constraints—be they political, economic, or military—within which they have to act. They can test the limits of those constraints, however, by taking risks for one another; that, rather than fishing trips or drinking parties, is how real mutual trust can develop and have

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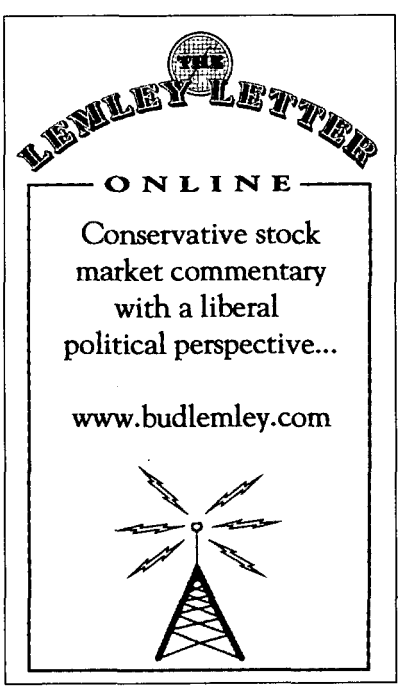
historic consequences. But friendship, and even trust, between leaders is never boundless. When Roosevelt died in April 1945, there was no reason to doubt the sincerity of Churchill's grief; but the hard fact remains that Churchill decided, after considerable hesitation, to stay away from the funeral. Meacham reckons that Churchill was testing American friendship in the hope that the new president, Harry Truman, would pay an early state visit to Britain. That hope was disappointed.

Meacham, a managing editor at *Newsweek* and contributing editor of this magazine, is an excellent storyteller, with a fine talent for thumbnail sketches of people and scenes. On the whole, he lets the facts speak for themselves, and avoids veering off into speculation about the what-ifs of history, or about the importance of friendship as a factor in great events. In this tightly-packed but relatively short book, presented as a work of serious non-fiction (and, in the best sense, journalism) rather than academic scholarship, he has made the right choices. By focusing on a relationship, he will hold the attention both of non-specialists, and also of those enthusiasts who have pored through the hundreds of works previously written about the wartime leaders.



As Churchill said, with disarming frankness, "no lover ever studied the whims of his mistress as I did those of President Roosevelt."

But there are at least two questions which are prompted but not answered by this book. First, were Churchill and Roosevelt so preoccupied by their own fraternal rivalry that they failed to understand Stalin, and therefore underestimated the cruelty with which he would treat the territories overrun by the Red Army? Of the two English-speaking leaders, it may be Churchill who had a better grip on Stalin's ruthlessness; but the prime minister was certainly not averse to making geopolitical deals over the heads of small European nations. It was Churchill, after all, who proposed that the Soviet Union should have 90 percent of the influence in Poland, in return for allowing 90 percent British influence in Greece—much to the chagrin of Polish democrats and Greek communists. In any case, it could be argued that Roosevelt and Churchill might have restrained Stalin more successfully if Roosevelt had not been so preoccupied with the breaking up of Europe's colonial possessions, including the British ones. Given that the British Empire was moribund anyway, was it ever worth making common cause, even rhetorically, with a tyrant like Stalin under the slogan of anti-imperialism?

The other question many readers of this book will ask is whether the Churchill-Roosevelt friendship has anything to teach us about the Anglo-American partnerships of modern times: Margaret Thatcher's friendship with Ronald Reagan, and later George Bush senior—or Tony Blair's interaction with Bill Clinton and now, George W. Bush.

The biggest change, of course, is the fact that over the past half-century, America's relative power has grown and that of Britain has sharply diminished: It looks even more true now than in 1945 that if London wants a seat at the top world table, it has no real alternative to its Washington connection, while the American hyperpower has an almost infinite variety of choices.

From this point of view, it is easy to understand the thinking behind Blair's pro-American foreign policy: Only by following the United States almost all the way can Britain hope to have some influence at the margins. During the 1990s, when a Tory government allowed quite serious differences with the Clinton administration to develop over Ireland and Bosnia, the end result was to Britain's disadvantage; American presidents may be susceptible to nudging from close friends, but they do not take kindly to being lectured, as Blair's predecessor John Major discovered.

Tony Blair may not have the historical vision or the animal charisma of a Winston Churchill; but he sensed from the outset that his relationships with White House incumbents must be made to work, and he has applied every drop of his personal skill to making friends with his American counterparts. But surely the main lesson from the Churchill-Roosevelt friendship is not about the scope of Anglo-American friendship, but about the constraints. However many steaks may be barbecued at the presidential ranch, the United States and Britain have different (albeit heavily overlapping) interests, and above all, different electorates, as Tony Blair is now discovering.

Earlier this year, many British voters were open to persuasion that war

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against Iraq was a just cause, as long as all the available facts had been gathered and considered in good faith. But they will not forgive their prime minister if it becomes obvious that "his" decision to join the war had, in fact, been made in Washington at least a year beforehand—and all subsequent discussions of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein were simply going through the motions. British citizens are neither viscerally anti-American, nor indifferent to the spread of nonconventional weapons—but they will not pardon a prime minister who pretends to be wrestling with an unresolved dilemma when, in fact, his hands have been tied by a decision made much earlier. More than once, Blair assured British voters that he had made no decision to go to war. But the investigation following the suicide of weapons expert David Kelly makes clear that preparations for war actually began last year. For all his flexibility, intelligence, and flair, this may yet be Blair's downfall. A calculated risk-taker by temperament, he may have taken one risk too many, in the cause of friendship with George W. Bush.

How does this compare with Churchill and Roosevelt? Beneath all the ostentatious (and doubtless, sincere) affection which they heaped on one another, the wartime leaders never forgot that their nations were in different places, geographically, historically, and even psychologically. The United States was on the brink of its emergence as an unmatched global power, while the British Empire, underneath all the pomp and pageantry, was living out its final years. It is a mark of both leaders' greatness that they understood how broadly their countries' interests coincided, and also where they diverged. As Meacham's excellent book reminds us, there is no such thing—in international politics, any more than in domestic politics—as unconditional friendship. As Harry Truman once said, only dogs can offer that.

Bruce Clark is currently on a research sabbatical from *The Economist*, where he has worked since 1998 as international security editor.

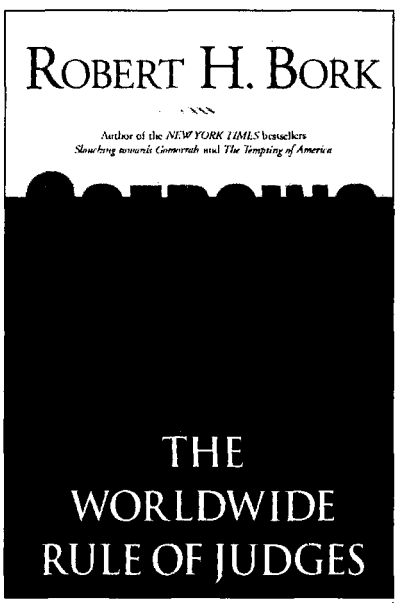
Bork Chop

The good judge has gone global.

By Stephen Pomper

A professor once told me that one of the key lessons of history is never to bet on the apocalypse. Somebody better tell Judge Bork! In three grimly titled books—*The Tempting of America*, *Slouching Towards Gomorrah*, and *Coercing Virtue*, his latest—Bork has made it his mission to place America at various way stations along the road to perdition. A museum-quality curmudgeon, Bork places great stock in our country's traditional social, sexual, and religious values, and profoundly mistrusts change. But clearly our values *have* changed over time, and Bork is looking for someone to blame. In *Coercing Virtue*, he focuses his wrath on judges, portraying them as stealth fighters racking up win after win in the culture wars while the complacent public snoozes.

Given Bork's history with the liberal establishment, perhaps it's therapeutic for him to write on the same angry theme over and over again. But honestly, what's in it for us readers? In a world where the Woodstock generation is dosing on Riopan Plus, Fox is the top-rated cable news network, and Republicans control Congress, the presidency, the Supreme Court, and 10 out of the 13 federal courts of appeals, does Bork really think people are going to have the patience for yet another book about the perfidy of liberal judges? Not likely. So in this latest work, he's thrown in a new angle: He's gone global.



Coercing Virtue: The Worldwide Rule of Judges
By Robert H. Bork
AEI Press, $25.00

Coercing Virtue is about how judges both in the United States and abroad are goading the entire Western world over the decadent edge. Sometimes in evaluating a project like this, it's best to start by trying to put ideology more or less to one side. But in this case, even if you do, the book comes up short.

Problem number one is that, from the perspective of anything other than gimmickry, *Coercing Virtue* is a strangely conceived book. It ranges broadly from a discussion of international law and institutions to separate chapters on the United States, Canada, and Israel. The bits on international law and institutions are at least interesting—they echo

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provocative conservative scholarship on the political content of international law and its proper role in the domestic sphere. But the other parts of the book neither hang together nor stand up particularly well on their own. The U.S. discussion is merely predictable: Bork marches out a standard litany of perceived liberal outrages concerning sexual, religious, and minority rights. But the chapters on Canada and Israel are difficult to digest. While Bork may know a fair amount about the case law in those countries, it's not at all clear whether he has a handle on Israeli or Canadian culture. This is a real problem. After all, aren't at least some areas of these cultures considerably more liberal than American culture? Without knowing the baseline, how are we to take seriously the idea that Israeli and Canadian judges are torpedoing their societies' traditional values?

Bork's response might be that he cares less about the particular values of those countries than the institution of democracy—and its general decline in the West. But that brings us to a bigger problem. Bork professes to have great admiration for the elected branches of government—the democratic institutions that he praises for their capacity to "allow compromise, to slow change, to dilute and tame absolutisms." But it turns out that his respect for those institutions finds its limits when they produce results he doesn't like. Consider, for example, Bork's dismissive treatment of the British parliament's decision to incorporate a multilateral human rights treaty into its domestic law. "[T]he Labour government made incorporation a major part of its program, while Conservatives opposed the move," he sniffs. "The coerced movement to the cultural left is predictable and familiar."

Coerced? Who was being coerced? The people voted Labor, and Labor passed the law. It's as simple as that. If Bork won't live by the results of the democratic process, then he should find another theory.

Detail from Albrecht Durer's "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

After three books about the road to perdition, somebody better tell Robert Bork to find a new subject.

But that's not in the cards and so, when discussing adverse public opinion, Bork resorts to befuddlement and (for lack of a better word) insults. Bork finds it remarkable that the public is "unaware" of the agenda that judges are advancing. He says that it is "a mystery" why most people in the world (including Americans) think that United Nations approval gives American actions moral legitimacy. He says that the American public has "almost no idea of what is in the Constitution" and the great sovereign people of Canada are "similarly ill-informed." And he finds it "extraordinary" that the Israeli public has accepted a supreme court opinion that Bork views as conferring too much power on the Israeli attorney general. Ahh, the People: weird, inscrutable, incurious, and ignorant. Why not just call them boneheads and be done with it?

The conflict between Bork's theoretical affinity for the elected branches of government and his practical contempt for the democratic electorate is just one of the things in *Coercing Virtue* that fails to compute. There are others for sure. His credibility on liberal judicial activism in the United States suffers from a total failure to address the Rehnquist court's conservative judicial activism, as expressed in an aggressive record of overturning congressional statutes and landmark court decisions like *Bush v. Gore*. He also shows a marked absence of proportionality when he observes that the Israeli supreme court is "simply the most activist, antidemocratic court in the world"—an amazing statement to make in a world where at least some courts still operate under the thumb of dictators and theocrats.

And Bork's policy intuitions do not seem altogether sound when he suggests that the United States should simply "ignore the Security Council and the U.N. altogether and go about preserving vital interests with those nations that are willing allies." Interesting idea! But precisely who does Bork think would be our willing allies under those circumstances?

Oh, forget it. Maybe at this point in his career, Bork has become so accustomed to dismissal by his opponents that he no longer seeks to persuade through his work. There are legitimate points and absurd points in *Coercing Virtue*, but more than anything else there are obvious points, animus, and imploding logic. *Coercing Virtue* is a few notches above Ann Coulter's work, but not as many as it should be. Maybe the lesson is that it's time for Bork to start developing a new theme; from the looks of this book, the apocalypse genre is, for him, pretty well tapped out.

Stephen Pomper is a lawyer in Washington, D.C.

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Sad Little Rich Country

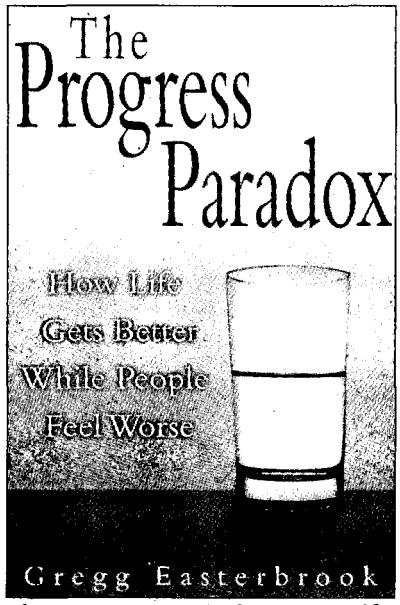
While American life is getting better, we aren't getting happier.

By David Wessel

Gregg Easterbrook is frustrated. He is certain that life is getting better for Americans and many others. He knows that we are living better than our grandparents did, and better than our great-grandparents imagined. (He's right.) He believes, and sought to demonstrate in his 1995 book, *A Moment on Earth*, that environmentalists have succeeded and that the world is getting cleaner, though they won't admit it. (The green crowd wasn't swayed.)

But people aren't convinced. Why aren't we happier, he wonders? Why, even before September 11, did so many Americans tell pollsters that the country was going downhill? Why is depression an increasingly common affliction? What are we so stressed out about? In his sixth book, Easterbrook sets out to answer a question posed by sociologist Alan Wolfe: "Why do capitalism and liberal democracy, both of which justify themselves on the grounds that they produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number, leave so much dissatisfaction in their wake?"

It is a very good question. Easterbrook—who writes for *The New Republic*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, ESPN.com, and this magazine, among others—wanders through Western philosophy and psychology (having written an earlier book on faith) seeking an answer. Ultimately, he doesn't find a satisfying one.



The Progress Paradox: How Life Gets Better While People Feel Worse
By Gregg Easterbrook
Random House, $24.95

The case that we are living a lot better than our recent ancestors in terms of health, longevity, and the goods and services we consume is a strong one. Easterbrook makes the case with anecdotes and what journalists call "factoids," those irresistible nuggets that lodge in the reader's mind and pop out at dinner table discussions. Here's one: "The typical American place of dwelling," he writes, "has 5.3 rooms for its average of 2.6 people. This means that a long-standing metric of comfortable living, 'a room of their own,' has been done one better. Americans of today have nearly two rooms of their own... Today the typical circumstance for an American, even a typical child or teenager, is to have his or her own bedroom—surely the first time in history this has been achieved for an entire large society." (My recent tour of college campuses with my 17-year-old daughter, however, suggests that Easterbrook gets carried away when he suggests that the typical college student has a single and that the "austere small dorm room of the past, two twin beds and two desks wedged in together" is disappearing.) He doesn't, though he might, dwell very much on the ways in which the Internet has changed our lives for the better. But here's a factoid I uncovered while preparing this review: His book lists for $24.95, but at the end of September you could have ordered it for $17.47 on Amazon.com.

Although Easterbrook asserts that he is trying to show that "average people" are "better off," he inexplicably opens his first chapter by describing restaurants that cater to people who fly their own planes, unconvincingly arguing that these aren't the private jets of the super-rich, but one- and two-engine planes of farmers, oil field workers, and others in the middle class. "Thousands of private aircraft are owned for personal use by people who are not rich," he asserts. I'm sure that's true, but it's not a very good way to convince skeptical readers that "average people" are better off. The middle 60 percent of American households, the Census Bureau says, had an annual income between $18,000 and $84,000 in 2002. I doubt a significant fraction of those folks own private aircraft.

My favorite factoid in this *paradox*, though one that might better serve a book attacking the decadence of U.S. society, is this: "For $75,000 Jackson & Perkins of Somis, Calif. ... will give a new rose variety the name of your choosing, fly you and a companion to Los Angeles for a week that includes a fine dinner with the company's plant-breeders and, once the new hybrid

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blooms, ship 300 of them FedEx around the country to anyone you select, so that friends and family will smell the rose that bears your name." He says more than 100 rose lovers have spent a total of over $75 million on this.

The cover of this book shows a glass of water that is, depending on your perspective, half-full or half-empty. Easterbrook's goal, in part, is to convince readers that it's half-full, and he provides a lot of evidence. But my sense is that convincing people takes more than facts and one-liners gleaned from the *Statistical Abstract of the United States*. Skeptical readers are more convinced when these facts and figures are accompanied by portraits of real people, perhaps a comparison of a modern middle-class family's life to that of its parents. This is hard to do well. Talking to ordinary people might shed light on the central question of this book: Why aren't we happier? Easterbrook has chosen instead to look for answers in the library.

He offers several intriguing hypotheses. Among them:

THE "UNSETTLED CHARACTER OF PROGRESS." This wonderful phrase describes something obvious once you think about it: The solution to one problem seems to bequeath another. We invent a polio vaccine, then fear the vaccine may cause other ailments. We make wireless communications possible and cheap, then find ourselves unable to escape the office or fearful that the SUV driver behind us is devoting more attention to his cell phone than the road. We find new miraculous cures for disease, then wonder if we can afford them. So much for the end of history.

BAD NEWS SELLS. Bad news helps political groups on the left and right raise money. It helps political challengers attack incumbents. It preoccupies the intellectual elites who have ready access to the printing press. It sells newspapers and draws viewers to local TV news stories. Here's another of Easterbrook's nuggets that sticks with you long after you've put the book down: The local NBC affiliate in Washington, D.C., changed the name of its weather segment from WeatherCenter to StormCenter during a snow storm 10 years ago, and never changed it back—even for sunny days.

LACK OF SLEEP. Americans sleep an hour less a night than they did a generation ago, he says, and two or three hours a night less than a century ago.

HUMAN NATURE. Perhaps we have an evolutionary predisposition to the negative which helped our ancestors survive. "We are built to be effective animals, not happy ones," evolutionary psychologist Robert Wright has written. Or perhaps the problem is that most Americans and Europeans are descended from people who weren't prosperous, people who were right to believe that the rich get everything and the rest of us get nothing. He calls this "abundance denial." Once it was true; it is no longer.

ENVY. We constantly compare ourselves to others, particularly to others who have more. I think there's a lot to this explanation: One big change in the past quarter century, it seems to me, is how much ordinary Americans know or think they know about how well the more fortunate live, thanks to TV, *People* magazine, and other media. And these media aren't concentrating on royalty or business aristocracy, but on the large number of folks with houses and cars that the bulk of us will never be able to afford.

Easterbrook dwells briefly, perhaps too briefly, on the nature and effects of economic inequality in the United States today. He has been convinced by Brookings Institution economist Gary Burtless that the slowdown in the growth of incomes of the middle of the middle class which began in the mid-1970s and lasted through the mid-1990s, is explained away by immigration. Native born Americans did great. The national numbers were distorted by the influx of immigrants who didn't earn much by American standards, but did much better than they would have in their home countries, he argues, so there's nothing to worry about or discuss. The economic impact of immigrants is worth some thought, and Mr. Burtless's provocative point is worth examination, but it's too facile an explanation for what happened in the 1970s and 1980s. The still unexplained slowing of productivity growth around 1973 meant that living standards of the American middle class didn't improve as much in a generation as they had, for instance, in the quarter century after World War II. That wasn't all about immigration. The widening gap between the wages of those with an education and those without made for greater inequality. So did a change in social norms in all sorts of American institutions. They now tolerate and even encourage much greater rewards for the best producers ("pay for performance") than had previously been the case not only in law firms, investment banks, and baseball teams, but also in big companies who rely on temps or outside contractors whom they pay less and offer fewer benefits.

As if to shield himself from critics who accuse him of overlooking the poorest among us, Easterbrook includes a chapter with four prescriptions: provide universal health care, raise the minimum wage even if it means higher prices, pay CEOs less, and spend more on foreign aid to poor countries. These are all respectable propositions, and someday Easterbrook may write more on how to accomplish each of these goals without unwelcome side effects. How, for instance, do we raise the minimum wage without pushing even more low-skilled jobs off-shore? The chapter reads like an afterthought.

But what most fascinates Easterbrook is why the haves aren't happier. He offers a remarkably trenchant survey of psychologists' thinking and research on the question of happiness along with Henny Youngman's penetrating insight: "What good is happiness? It can't buy money." He speculates on whether the satisfaction of so many material wants gives people the time and leisure to be depressed. He dissects the origins of modern stress. He wonders if concern about the future prevents us from enjoying the present. He suggests that our new-found ability to be alone (in our houses, on our jobs, in our cars, on our computers) denies us the pleasure of the company of others. And he suggests, though not in so many words, that we're like the dog in the car-

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toon who one day catches up with the car he's chasing, and asks: "Now what?"

Then he turns to sermonizing, with some strong arguments and a few interesting examples, that we would be better off if we had a more positive attitude and were more grateful, more forgiving, more spiritual. I'm sure he's right, but I doubt he will convince anyone who isn't already convinced. I think he knows that. "Gradually moving beyond materialistic obsession, while discarding fashionable theories of pointlessness in order to reclaim a mostly hopeful view of the human prospect," he writes, is the sort of change that "men and women must make for themselves."

It's hard to argue with that. I'd add another ingredient: We're short on idealistic, inspiring, and charismatic national leaders at the moment. I've met and read about enough good souls working on college campuses and in small towns, and of selfless quests to alleviate disease and poverty in the Third World (see Tracy Kidder's new biography of Paul Farmer, the crusading physician working in Haiti) to avoid despair. I wish a couple of them had more prominence nationally or internationally.

The optimistic journalist is rarely held in high regard by his or her peers, (I know: I wrote a book with a colleague in 1998 that argued that the American middle class would do better over the next 20 years than it did over the past 20 years.) Those who predict calamity get more attention and often more respect. I suspect that's always been true. Easterbrook's goals here are, first, to persuade the reader that his optimism is justified and, second, to explain why people don't seem to accept such a view. On the first, he provides plenty of ammunition to those who already agree with him but, I fear, not enough convincing argument or criticism of competing views to persuade any reader who doesn't already see the world the way he does. On the second, the reader joins him on an often interesting intellectual quest, but the goal, in the end, proves elusive.

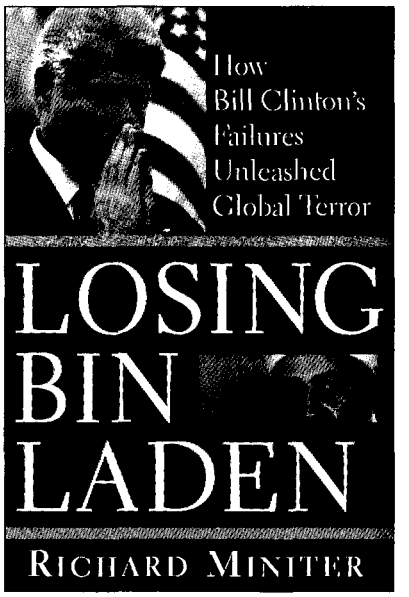
David Wessel, the deputy Washington bureau chief of *The Wall Street Journal*, writes a weekly column called "Capital."

Kill Bill

The relentless effort to blame 9/11 on President Clinton.

By Jamie Malanowski

Losing bin Laden might be thought of as the pilot for a series to be called "CSI: Right Wing Conspiracy." In the book, British journalist Richard Miniter sifts through eight years' worth of the Clinton administration's approach to Osama bin Laden's terrorism, and lays the blame for failing to prevent the 9/11 attacks squarely on—altogether now, Regnery Publishing buffs!—Bill Clinton. Armed with 20/20 hindsight, Miniter finds a long series of missed opportunities to capture or kill the terrorist. The result is an odd book that manages to raise serious questions and make serious points about the competing pressures and interests that go into creating a foreign policy, but that still overreaches in manipulative and mendacious ways.



Losing Bin Laden: How Bill Clinton's Failures Unleashed Global Terror
By Richard Miniter
Regnery Publishing, $27.95

In truth, if Miniter were about 50 percent less tendentious, he would be 100 percent more convincing. It's distressing to read the catalog of chances to nip Osama bin Laden that went unavailed. Long before 9/11, for example, the Sudanese government had the terror kingpin under its watchful eye and was willing to unload him, but couldn't find a government that would agree to take him. Later, after more attacks, and after Clinton authorized bin Laden's execution, Predator drones had him in their sights on numerous occasions, but never was the order to fire issued. The August 1998 cruise missile attacks on bin Laden training camps in Afghanistan missed him by moments; apparently he was warned by someone in the Pakistani government, with whom we had shared our intentions. It's wrenching to read these accounts, knowing that the atrocities of 9/11 loomed.

There's no question that these were failures. But the charge that Miniter wants to prosecute is that Bill Clinton was responsible for these failures. Whenever he gets the chance, Miniter likes to punctuate a scene in which Osama or one of his henchmen was industriously planning one of their mass murders with

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a contrasting scene in which Clinton is raising money or conducting a defense of his sexual adventures. Miniter never says that Clinton did nothing to stop bin Laden, only that he could have and should have done more, done it earlier, and done it more forcefully. In other words, he should have gone for the big inning instead of bunting, or thrown the ball on third-and-one instead of rushing, or done any of the sorts of things recommended by the second-guessers who routinely call sports-talk programs after the game is played. No defense by Clinton is possible; after the murder of 3,000 people, very few people in positions of responsibility in our government can look themselves in the mirror and justifiably claim to have done all they could have.

However, if Miniter had been less interested in leveling what seems awfully close to a blood libel, it would be easier to congratulate him for producing a clear account of the competing policy questions, institutional inertia, bureaucratic competition, and the personality conflicts that thwarted the formulation and execution of a policy to stop bin Laden. When you look at these, it's clear that mistakes were made. But other times, actions were taken or not taken for good, sound reasons, and they just didn't work out. And still other times, actions were taken for silly, stupid reasons that seem beyond any president's control.

For example, Miniter faults Clinton's "proportionate response" to Saddam's plot to kill former President George Bush: Clinton, you'll recall, fired 23 Tomahawk missiles at the headquarters of Saddam's intelligence service. Miniter assures us that both Saddam and bin Laden "most likely" saw this as an example of "timidity and toothlessness." Well, perhaps they did, although if Miniter is so adept at tapping into these fugitives' brainwaves, he is doing the world a disservice by using his skill on so small a project as this book. (Note that he makes the same wimpy charge about America's response to the "Black Hawk Down" battle in Mogadishu, but doesn't bring up America's failure to oust Saddam in 1991 or to back the Kurds that year; I guess we're only talking about our pussilanimity when a Democrat is in charge.) Miniter doesn't tell us what a better response would have been. Shock and awe? Invasion? Miniter scorns Clinton's decision to take a course that averted casualties. Okay, so it was a little Aaron Sorkinish of him. But does Miniter seriously think that if Clinton had blown up a bunch of Iraqi spooks, Osama would have chucked the whole terrorism thing and gone into the olive oil business? Get real.

A lot of the time, it's hard to keep track of just what Miniter is accusing Clinton of. He notes that Clinton made only one public comment after the World Trade Center attack in 1993, and says "this clearly demonstrated that he did not sense the importance of the bombing." This is a charge that seems credible; it's hard to believe that he didn't grasp the issue more firmly. But just 48 pages later, Miniter writes, "Less than a month after the World Trade Center explosion, Clinton became obsessed with capturing and convicting" the perpetrators. So which is it, insensible or obsessed? Miniter then slaps Clinton for putting Richard Clarke of the National Security Council in charge of capturing the suspects, instead of "a general, a cabinet secretary or an elder statesman." Or James Bond, for that matter. It seems that appointing someone smart, vigorous, and determined who'll bang the heads of the sclerotic generals, cabinet secretaries, and elder statesmen who don't have the celerity necessary

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to pursue this sort of villain is exactly the right thing to do.

And of course, Ramzi Yousef, the World Trade Center bomber, was captured under Clarke's watch, and is now in a federal prison, hopefully rotting.

Miniter criticizes the Clinton administration for spending a lot of time treating the attacks of al Qaeda as law enforcement issues. He argues, sensibly, that we could have done a lot better if the F.B.I. and C.I.A. could have worked together. That's obviously true; but should Clinton have invested his time trying to overcome both the good historical precedents for separating the agencies, as well as the entrenched prejudices of the stubborn members of the agencies themselves, in order to push through legislation to change the law that separated their spheres of action? Only with the hindsight of 9/11 would you argue that would have been a useful investment of the president's time. Besides, Miniter soon goes on to talk about how budget cutbacks had limited the C.I.A.'s effectiveness, leaving us to wonder how much better cooperation would have helped if the C.I.A. was so inept. Miniter blames Clinton for the C.I.A.'s problems because then-director James Woolsey got himself into a feud with his budget master, Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.), who kept slashing C.I.A. appropriations, including money for Arabic translators, in revenge. In other words, Miniter expects a president to pull himself away from brokering an agreement between Rabin and Arafat to moderate a dispute between a smug, inept bureaucrat and a childish, irresponsible senator.

It seems that for most of Miniter's accusations of Clintonian ineptitude, there are extenuating circumstances. Now, no one likes an extenuating circumstance, but only a fool thinks they don't exist. That offer by the Sudanese to turn over bin Laden? Turns out the Justice Department didn't think they had enough evidence to indict him. Now, Miniter quotes an unnamed Bush administration official telling him that there was "plenty" of evidence on which to bring charges. Who knows? You have to wonder whether this official also believes there's "plenty" of evidence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq.

What about those Predator drones that had bin Laden in their sights? Miniter says that the people monitoring them were sure they had lined up bin Laden 20 times, but that the Clinton administration required an unrealistic level of certitude before firing them. Of course, he reports that at least one of those times, it wasn't bin Laden, just some sheik out playing with his falcons. One can only imagine the ebullience with which Miniter would have written the chapter that detailed how we obliterated the sheik, popped open some champagne to celebrate, called off the hunt, and allowed the elusive bin Laden to slip away.

And what about that famous Cruise missile attack that bin Laden managed to elude after getting a warning from a high-level operative in the Pakistani government? Miniter tells us that whoever that person was, he learned of our plans because we told the government

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what we were doing. Miniter says the United States did that because our missiles would be coming from the direction of India, and the administration was worried Pakistan would see the missiles, think that India had launched a nuclear strike upon them, and retaliate in kind. So we told the Pakistanis because we didn't want to cause the deaths of hundreds of millions of innocent people.

What a namby-pamby that Clinton was. So unlike bin Laden.

There's a person missing from Miniter's story. It's Winston Churchill. Churchill is a giant in history because he grasped the danger Hitler posed, and used all his powers to warn his countrymen, and flog the government into action—all in real time. There is no figure like that here, surely none that has a better record on this issue than Clinton. Miniter does quote some Republican congressmen like Bill McCullum and Newt Gingrich warning about the threat, but if either of these men spent a tenth of time warning us about the Islamist threat that they spent panty-sniffing after Clinton, we might remember. No one in the GOP made terrorism an issue in the 2000 election. Remember how Pakistan figured in the campaign? No, it wasn't because a reporter asked George W. Bush if he thought Pakistan would be a reliable ally if we needed to invade Afghanistan. It was because a reporter asked Dubya if he knew the Pakistani president's name. And he didn't.

One deeply hopes that the present administration learns from the Clinton administration's mistakes—and their own. Nobody wants to see *Losing bin Laden II: The Bush Years* on bookshelves a few years down the line. Yet somehow we doubt that Miniter and Regnery would be the ones producing it, even if it were justified. They seem more interested in waging partisan political conflicts than winning the war on terror.

Jamie Malanowski is a New York writer.

Hidden Assets

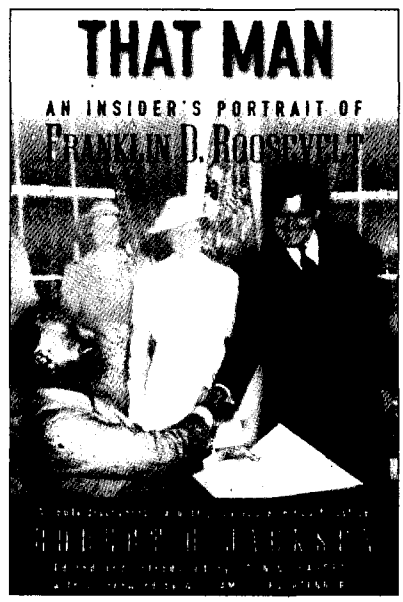
A new window into the FDR White House.

By Matthew Dallek

In the late 1940s, Robert Jackson, a Supreme Court Justice, decided to write a book about FDR and recount his experiences in Washington during the New Deal and World War II. His former colleagues, he thought, had written their memoirs, and they had said their piece about Roosevelt; now Jackson wanted to weigh in with a balanced, honest recollection, a candid portrait of the man who had nominated him to the high court. He called the manuscript "That Man" as a rejoinder to Roosevelt's critics, who so hated FDR they couldn't bear to say his name.

But in 1954, Jackson suffered a heart attack and died before he could finish this book. More than 40 years later, Robert Barrett, a law professor at St. John's University working on a Jackson biography, received a call from Jackson's family. They told him that Jackson's son, Bill, had died, and that the relatives had found a manuscript in a closet in Bill Jackson's Manhattan apartment.

Barrett read the pages and believed that he had struck historical gold. He decided that the book deserved to get published. In order to round out the portrait of FDR that Jackson was seeking to write, Barrett inserted excerpts from many other sources, including Jackson's oral history and his unpublished autobiography. At times, these insertions disrupt the book's flow. But on the whole, this is a winning memoir—the story of Jackson's life in the White House; a powerful portrait of our 32nd president; and, most of all, a tribute to the humanity and the vision that stood at the heart of the Roosevelt administration.



That Man: An Insider's Portrait of Franklin D. Roosevelt
By Robert H. Jackson
Oxford University Press, $30.00

Robert Jackson had a unique vantage point on his times. When he arrived in Washington in 1934, he took a job as general counsel at the Bureau of Revenue, the IRS's predecessor. He rose rapidly through the ranks. He became the chief of the anti-trust division at the Department of Justice. He later served as solicitor general, then as assistant attorney general, and then as a Supreme Court justice followed by the capstone to his career—as the senior U.S. prosecutor at Nuremberg. One of Roosevelt's close friends, Jackson played various roles in FDR's White House: As presidential counselor and aide-de-camp, he served as an unoffi-

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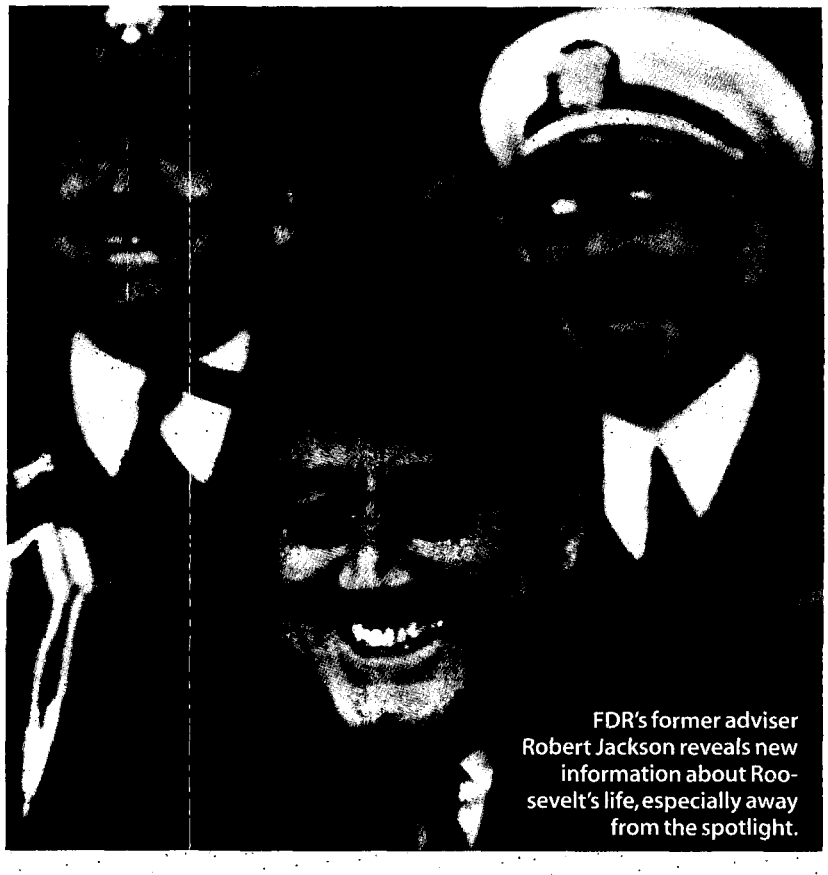
cial sounding board for Roosevelt's ideas and strategies.

Jackson had a hand in many of the most important debates of the 1930s and 1940s. He sent memos to the president, and he helped draft speeches and write messages to Congress. He took to the airwaves and the committee hearing rooms of Capitol Hill to defend Roosevelt's policies and articulate his own views on the nation's biggest issues. When he attacked the business tycoons who opposed the New Deal on the radio and in the papers, some of Roosevelt's critics branded Jackson a socialist.

Jackson doesn't shy away from discussing FDR's shortcomings. He argues, for example, that FDR was weak when it came to administration. Roosevelt didn't like to fire his aides, and he didn't like to settle disputes between staff members. He had a habit of changing his mind depending on the views of the person who had talked to him last, and had a "happy disregard of channels, ranks and priorities." While this often worked to his advantage, FDR occasionally infuriated bureaucrats with that same disregard. Lower-level officials were sometimes asked to intervene in matters where only the president had the authority to make a decision.

FDR once asked Jackson to settle a dispute over foreign financial policy between Secretary of State Cordell Hull and Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau. Jackson was shocked. "[It] would be impossible for me," wrote Jackson, "to arbitrate between two men, both my senior in years, both my senior in Cabinet rank, both my senior in service there..." Jackson demurred. FDR "ultimately had to take up the task himself."



FDR's former adviser Robert Jackson reveals new information about Roosevelt's life, especially away from the spotlight.

That Man, in the end, is a strong endorsement of Roosevelt. It contains a trove of new information about Roosevelt's life—his interactions with staff and friends, his habits when he was on vacation, his temperament and style away from the spotlight. The book also has some charming vignettes such as the one about a sailing trip through the Florida Keys. FDR had been ill, but once at sea, he began to relax. He caught mackerel and ate cooked fish for breakfast. He played nightly games of low-stakes poker and his luck, Jackson writes, was "phenomenal."

"... [FDR] had rested. Life had been most informal in dress and in conduct. He was of course treated respectfully by all, but with perfect informality. In fishing contests, playing cards, and conversation, he was and wanted to be an equal. He asked no favors and granted none. He played the game on its merits. He was able to avoid all pose. He was away from curious eyes. We were completely isolated ... It had been one of the delightful experiences of life."

When Roosevelt died suddenly of a stroke on April 12, 1945, Jackson returned to the Department of Justice to eulogize his friend. Millions of people stood with FDR, Jackson told the audience, because "while he walked with Kings ... he never lost the common touch; ... he was their friend and advocate; ... while he lived there would be no forgotten man." Jackson predicted that long into the future, "The figure of Roosevelt will stand 'like a sharply cut rock in the midst of a shapeless sea.'" *That Man*, after languishing in a closet for so many years, is a unique historical find and a ringing affirmation of that prediction.

Matthew Dallek, the author of *The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics*, works as a speechwriter in Washington D.C.

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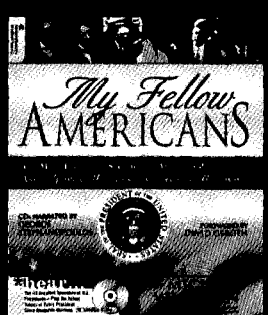

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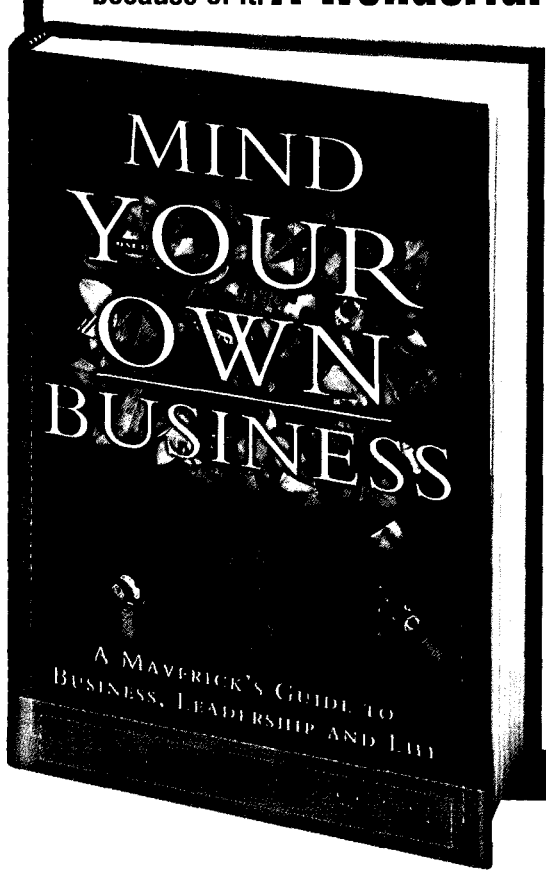

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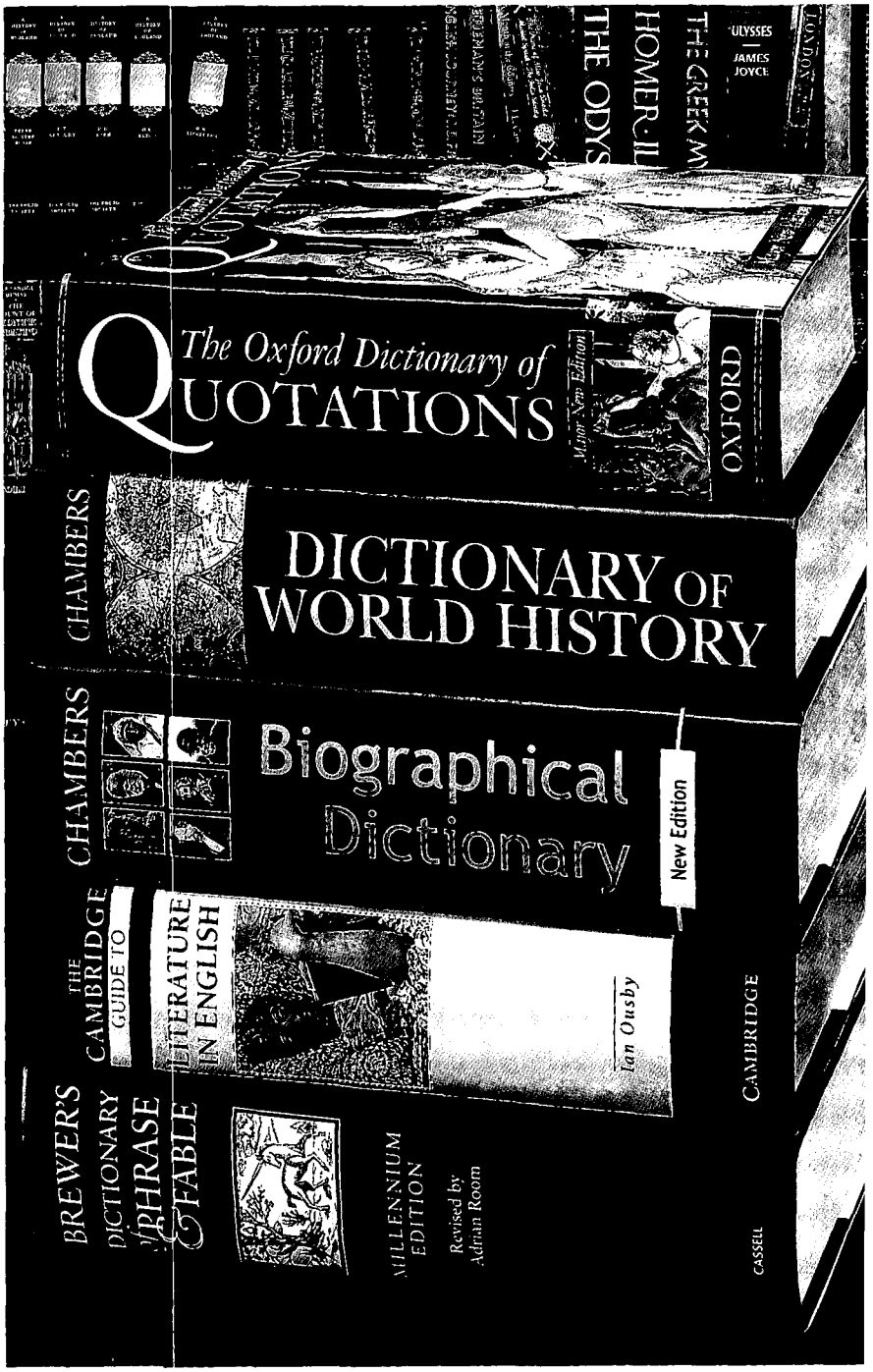

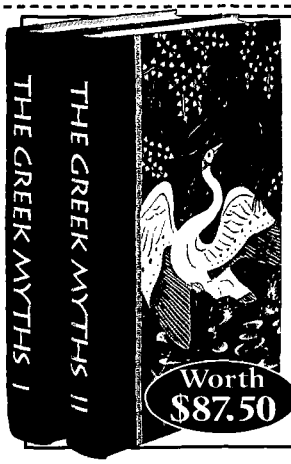

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